

# DIAMOND~DICK

BOYS BEST

## JR WEEKLY JR.

Issued Weekly. By Subscription \$2.50 per year. Entered as Second Class Matter at New York Post Office by STREET & SMITH, 238 William St., N. Y.

No. 284.

Price, Five Cents.

### DIAMOND DICK'S CANNON-BALL SPECIAL

OR  
HANDSOME HARRY'S FINEST



THE IRON BALL STRUCK THE DOOR WITH A TREMENDOUS CRASH.

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NEW YORK, March 22, 1902.

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# Diamond Dick's Cannon-Ball Special;

OR,

## HANDSOME HARRY'S FINEST.

By the author of "DIAMOND DICK."

### CHAPTER I.

#### FORTY POUNDS OF BULLION.

"Hello, Griswold!"

"Howdy, Diamond Dick."

"When did you come down from the Little Ophir?"

"Jest got here. Feared I'd miss this show an' I humped myself like Sam Hill. I'm pertic'ler fond of a show—like it better'n a squaw does a string o' glass beads."

"What have you got in the bag?"

"Forty pounds o' bullion ter go by express."

"This is no place for forty pounds of bullion."

"Oh, I ain't skeered. I've come down with four hundred pounds many a time."

"Why didn't you put it in the express office?"

"Feared I'd miss seein' the beginnin' o' the show."

"Come over to my office with me and we'll put it in the safe. The express office is closed by this time."

"Nary, Dick. I'll hang onter the yaller stuff. Hold yer whist, now. Hyer comes a gal, an' I'll bet we're goin' ter hev somethin' fine. Whoop-ya, sis! Cut loose with yer funny bizness!"

The scene was the Kohinoor Concert Hall—a very large room in the Kohinoor Hotel, Ouray, Arizona.

The Nonpareil Specialty Company held the boards, and every ticket brought in four-bits.

Old Diamond Dick was there, and so was young Diamond Dick, and Handsome Harry, and Two-Spot Peters, and Bung Loo.

Old Dick was not very fond of that particular species of histrionic endeavor, and he was there in the line of duty.

The agent at Tough-Nut—the town at the southern terminus of Diamond Dick's railroad—had sent the following message to the Dicks, late in the afternoon:

"The Dicks, Ouray: The Nonpareil Specialty Company, playing Ouray to-night, are beats and deadheads. They jumped their hotel bill here, and the Tough Nut sheriff is coming with an attachment for their trunks. Please watch them."

So the Dicks, pard Harry and the boys were there on the watch.

The old veteran was in the center of the house, well forward; Bertie held the right wing, and the Serpent of Siskiyou the extreme left; the New York kid and the Chink were in the "bald-head row."

While Diamond Dick was sizing up the rough-looking patrons who had shelled out their four-bits and filled the hall to the doors, Andy Griswold batted his way to a reserved seat next to Dick's, making use of a heavy canvas bag to help clear the way.

Then had ensued the conversation which begins this chapter, and during which a young woman, in short skirts, had walked out behind the kerosene footlights and ducked her curly head.

The piano chinkled, and Dick, looking at a large card which had been placed on an easel at one side, discovered that the young lady was "Mademoiselle Zuleika," and that her specialty was ragtime.

She had a voice like the screech of a catamount, but Andy Griswold yelled with delight.

"Tumble off somethin' else!" he whooped, jumping up in his seat and throwing two silver dollars at the singer.

The girl picked up her silver dollars, ducked again, threw a kiss at Griswold and proceeded to torture old Dick's nerves with another ballad that was worse than the first.

"If you throw any more money up there, Gris-

wold," said Diamond Dick, "I'll have you run out of the hall!"

"Dog-gone it! Ain't you got no ear fer music?"

"Not for that kind."

At the close of the second spasm, Griswold did not throw any money, but bawled again:

"Tumble off another!"

"Tumble off the stage!" cried the New York kid, shrilly.

"Makee sneak!" struck in Bung Loo.

The girl was undecided, but finally the man at the piano played her out into the wings and played a Dutchman on in her place.

The old veteran gave a start.

There was a familiar look about the Dutchman, and a shout of laughter went up from young Diamond Dick on one side, and from Handsome Harry on the other.

Two-Spot also "put up a holler."

They did not need the card on the easel to tell them that their old pard, Fritz Dunder, the "hot tamale," was before them.

The last the Dicks had seen of Fritz he was in Chicago, badly handicapped, and hardly able to call his soul his own.

During an absent-minded moment he had committed matrimony, and was doing time for it.

And how did it happen that Fritz was there, in Ouray, doing a stunt with a lot of tie-walkers and hotel-jumpers?

Fritz did a Dutch clog, and did it well.

He also sang a song, but he did not do that so well.

He had a voice which he couldn't depend on, and sometimes it went where he wanted it to go, and sometimes it didn't.

"Take your bazoo over to the blacksmith and let him hammer out the kinks!" shouted Two-Spot.

Fritz did not appear to recognize the New York kid, and he stopped the song in the middle, leaned across the footlights and shook his fist.

"Py shiminy grickets!" he shouted. "You make some monkey doodle pitzness mit me und you vill

haf to be took to der undertaker alretty. Dis iss my turn!"

"You're givin' us all a turn!" was Two-Spot's come-back.

"Go soakee head!" chimed in Bung Loo.

"You bed my life it's my head, und——"

"I'm glad it ain't mine," said the Bowery boy, subsiding.

"I villi hand you a gouple oudt in front, ven der show iss over," the Dutchman went on.

Then he quit giving his attention to the New York kid and talked to the audience.

"Kind peoples, I haf a good vone for you. Lis'en vonce. Oof 'Goo-Goo Eyes' iss a vone-shtep, und 'Sveet Marie' iss a doo-shtep, vat iss 'Bred in Old Kenducky'? Ah, ha, I haf got you now. Five cents a loaf, don'd id?"

Two-Spot groaned, Bung Loo yelped and straightened out in his seat, and a revolver cracked from back toward the door, and Fritz had to run from the stage to save his life.

The next man on the bills was "Neb, the modern Hercules."

He came out in trunks and tights, planted himself firmly and held up his arms.

Then he turned around, still posing, so the eyes of the audience could gaze at the muscles of his back.

"Every move a picture!" chirped Two-Spot.

Some one rolled out a cannonball.

The modern Hercules picked it up and played with it.

Then came another ball, and he played with both, juggling them as a juggler would toss marbles.

The Serpent of Siskiyou was interested, and he traded seats with a man in the front row.

Another cannonball was rolled in and Neb kept the three of them in the air.

It was a difficult feat, and one of the balls dropped, shot across the stage, passed between two of the footlights and might have smashed the piano but for Harry.

With a bound, he sprang forward, caught the ball and held it high in the air.

"Judgment!" he bellowed.

"Take your base!" the New York kid shouted, and the audience sent up a roar.

"Git up thar, Harry, an' give him a few lessons!" called some one.

"Do a stunt yerself!" cried Andy Griswold.

"Ketch it, neighbor!" said Harry, and hurled the ball straight at the strong man.

But the strong man didn't want to "ketch it."

It was coming with too much force, so he dodged, and the spectators went frantic.

"Fake!" was the cry.

"No good!"

"Stampede the outfit!"

Restless and noisy movements were heard from every part of the hall, and it looked as though there was to be trouble.

Old Diamond Dick, however, leaped into his chair.

"Order!" he commanded. "You have paid your money to see this show, and if you've been fooled you have only yourselves to blame. Let it go on to a finish! I won't countenance any interference."

The old veteran was aiming to protect the performers, and was not expecting the next move on the part of the strong man.

Coming quickly down to one end of the row of footlights, the modern Hercules bowled one of the cannonballs along the row, smashing every lamp; then, quick as a flash, he picked up a smaller ball and launched it straight at the big lamp which swung over the center of the hall.

"Rough-house!" roared the strong man, as darkness enveloped the scene; "two-minutes rough-house!"

And then they had it, good and plenty.

## CHAPTER II.

### TWO-MINUTES "ROUGH-HOUSE."

To say that old Diamond Dick was astounded at this play on the part of the strong man would have painted it mildly.

Whether that part of the act was down on the bills or not the old veteran did not know.

Nor did he have time to do much guessing.

He endeavored to shout a command, but his voice was drowned in the hubbub.

In a twinkling the audience was turned into an unruly rabble.

Those in the rear tried to rush toward the stage, and those in front made an attempt to plunge for the doors.

The result was the warmest kind of a mix-up, and friends pummeled friends, unable to distinguish friend from foe in the darkness.

The shock of battle made the windows rattle, and, every now and then, the roar was punctuated by shots as a man unloosened his shooters and turned loose at the ceiling by way of increasing the excitement.

Old and young Diamond Dick, and Handsome Harry managed to get together and made a systematic attempt at enforcing order.

The old veteran, after a time, succeeded in making himself heard.

His authoritative voice had its effect, and at last Frenchy, the half-breed Canuck, who owned the hotel and concert hall, appeared on the stage with an assistant, each of them carrying two lamps.

Climbing to an elevated position, old Diamond Dick called out:

"The row was started by this alleged company of actors, and you men in the audience can hardly be blamed, but the *melee* is a disgrace to the town of Ouray. It is very fortunate that there were no women or children present, otherwise there is no telling how serious a condition of affairs might have resulted.

"From what I can learn the Nonpareil Specialty Company is an aggregation of fakes and deadbeats, and you may consider that you have all been skinned out of your entrance money.

"But that is no excuse for making trouble, and I have had all of this rough-house work that I'm going to stand to-night. I would like Andy Griswold to

come up here with me and my pards, and the rest of you can take your departure as quietly as you can."

The Dicks, Harry and the two boys were on the stage.

A man struggled through the press and leaped up beside them.

The man was not Griswold, but Buck Keever, the sheriff of Ouray County.

"What kind of an outfit is this Specialty Company, anyhow?" growled Keever.

"Skinners, the lot of 'em," answered Harry.

"And the strong boy is the boss skinner of the lot," put in the New York kid, "but I can't just figure out what Fritz Dunder is training with the pin-heads for. Wienerwurst is straight goods, or used to be."

"Why did the strong man give the signal for a rough-house?" put in Diamond Dick, Jr. "I can't understand that."

"Isn't Griswold down there?" shouted Diamond Dick.

"He must hev slipped out, Dick," some one called back.

"He couldn't have done that," answered the old veteran. "He was close to me when the fracas began, and we were both well down in front so that it would have been almost impossible for Griswold to get away."

"I tell you wan t'ing, Deek," said Jean, the Canuck, "maybe he got t'roo unter de stage? Py gar, I bet he did!"

Diamond Dick had not thought of that.

"Bertie," said he, "you and Harry and the boys take a look for Andy Griswold. He was foolish enough to bring in here some forty pounds of Little Ophir bullion. Look through the hall for Andy and the bullion, and Keever and I will do the same in this part of the layout."

Young Diamond Dick, Harry and the boys started for the auditorium, and the old veteran, taking a lamp from the Canuck's hand, leaped to the floor near the piano, pulled open a trap under the stage, and pursued the search in that direction.

Not only was it impossible for them to find Griswold and the treasure he had foolishly brought into the hall with him, but neither could any of the Specialty Company be found.

Their trunks were in the dressing-rooms, open and with contents disarranged, but the members of the company had vanished.

"The sheriff of Tough Nut will be up here to-night to attach this lot of truck," said old Diamond Dick, waving his hand toward the trunks, "and you'd better take charge of them, Kever, and wait till he comes."

"I'll do it," replied the sheriff, and proceeded to drag the trunks all into one dressing-room and to close the lids.

Diamond Dick went out on the stage and found Bertie and Jean.

"Griswold isn't anywhere around," said the young sport, "and neither is the bag of bullion."

"Maybe he got away vid it, eh?" suggested the Canuck. "He might haf got unter ze stage and vent out by ze stage entrance, and zat ees v'y ve no find heem."

"It's possible," returned old Diamond Dick, "but it's more probable, according to my way of thinking, that this company had their eye on the bullion and made the disturbance for the simple purpose of lifting it."

"You think they steal ze bullion?" gasped Jean, rolling his eyes.

"It would be easy for the strong man to run out from under the stage and grab Griswold in the confusion and darkness. I don't say that he did, but suspicion points that way."

"Py gar!" cried the Canuck, running off into the wings, "they have not paid for ze hall, they have not paid ze board-bill! A gang of rob-bairs, efery wan! But I catch dem, you bet I catch dem!"

The auditorium was now empty save for Handsome Harry, who was turning over the chairs in a final attempt to get some glimpse of the missing Griswold.

Just as the Canuck vanished into the wings at one side, Two-Spot Peters appeared at the other.

"Second floor," cried the New York kid, "Room No. 6, at the end of the hall! I heard some one groaning in there an' tried to get in, but the strong man jumped out of another room, grabbed me and threw me down the stairs. Make a try at room 6!"

Handsome Harry heard the alarm, and he leaped to the stage and followed the Dicks as they hurried through an entrance which led into the office of the hotel.

A moment later the three friends were racing up the stairs to the second floor.

"Look out!" called Diamond Dick, the instant they reached the hall and started along it.

A rumbling sound followed his words, and the old veteran leaped into the air to permit the passage of a cannonball which came bumping along the boards.

Bertie likewise got out of the way, but the old Serpent spread out his feet and reached down with his big hands, and caught the ball, although the impact nearly threw him over.

The modern Hercules and the girl were standing farther down the hall in front of the door of room 6.

They were still clad in their stage costumes and seemed determined to oppose the advance of the Dicks.

"Stand where ye are!" cried the big fellow.

"What's the matter with you?" asked Diamond Dick.

"There ain't nothin' the matter with me," said the strong man, through his teeth, "but there'll be somethin' the matter with you fellers if ye keep interferin' with us."

"Stow yer guff!" retorted the old Serpent, angrily. "Ye kain't run things as ye please in this man's town, an' we'll put ye next ter thet in erbout sixty howlin' seconds!"

"Why did you put out the lights in the concert hall and raise a disturbance?" demanded Diamond Dick, sternly.

"You people was raisin' hob with us, an' the only

way fer us ter escape was ter git ye ter fightin' among yerselves. Go 'way an' leave us alone."

"We'll go away," answered the old veteran, "but not until we have a look into room 6."

"Ye'll never look inter this room."

"Why not?"

"Kase one of the members of the company is sick in there, an' he can't be disturbed."

"Get out of the way!" commanded old Diamond Dick, taking a revolver from his pocket and started along the hall.

"I ain't afeared o' yer gun," snarled the big fellow; "come nigh me an' I'll make ye think ye was hit by a cyclone."

The girl, an angry look on her face, plucked a dagger from the bosom of her stage dress and made ready to be of what assistance she could to her companion.

The Dicks, side by side, advanced steadily, and the old Serpent, stooping suddenly, bowled the cannonball between them and knocked the strong man's feet out from under him.

The big shot sped on and came to a halt against the wall at the side of the door to room 6 with a force that made the building shiver.

"Now, then," said young Diamond Dick, springing toward the girl, "we've got matters right in our own hands."

### CHAPTER III.

#### FRITZ LEAVES HIS CARD.

Mademoiselle Zuleika did not stand passively and allow the young sport to disarm her.

On the contrary, she leaped toward him like a tigress, the dagger sweeping in a half circle over her head.

As the blow descended, Bertie deftly dodged and caught the girl by the wrist.

She struggled like a fiend, but he had no difficulty at all in holding her.

"Steady!" he cried; "I don't want to be rough with you, but you have got to keep quiet!"

Meanwhile, the strong man had endeavored to rise from the floor; he was prevented, however, by the old veteran, who placed a foot on his breast and forced him down.

"Lie right where you are," said Diamond Dick, making a threatening gesture with his revolver; "we're going to see who it is that's occupying room 6, and if you try to prevent us you'll regret it."

The strong man muttered a curse, but the blued barrel of the old veteran's forty-four, covering him at such close range, took all the resistance out of him.

"Harry," went on Diamond Dick, "see who's in that room."

Handsome Harry stepped to the door and tried it, but found it locked.

"Force it," said the old veteran.

"Keno, pard," answered Harry, picking up the cannonball and retreating a few steps.

Poising the solid shot in his right hand, the old Serpent held it for a moment, and then threw himself forward and let the missile go.

The iron ball struck the door with a tremendous crash, bursting it inward.

The racket caused by the set-to brought the Canuck and Buck Keever to the scene.

"V'at you do?" cried the half-breed.

"Two-Spot Peters heard groans coming from within that room," replied Diamond Dick, "and we thought we would investigate and discover the cause. The strong man and the girl tried to prevent us, that's all."

"Harry has just done a little specialty of his own," laughed Diamond Dick, Jr., "and effected an entrance."

"What have you done with the trunks, Keever?" queried Dick.

"Left 'em in charge of a deputy."

"That's right. Don't let them get out of your possession until the sheriff from Tough Nut arrives."

"Vat vill I do for ze board bill dat iss owing to me?" spoke up Jean. "Some odder wan gets ze trunks, and, by gar, I get nozzing."

"You get the experience," said young Diamond

Dick, shaking the girl's hand, which he was still holding, and forcing her to let go of the dagger.

The knife fell and Bertie stamped his heel on the thin blade and broke it in pieces.

"Have you a pair of bracelets with you, Kever?" asked Diamond Dick.

"Yes," answered the sheriff, developing a pair.

"Then place them on this man and take him to the lock-up. You'll have to look out for him. He's strong as a horse, but I don't think he could stop a bullet if you fired it at him at close range."

"What about the girl?" inquired Kever, after stooping and snapping the darbies about the strong man's thick wrists. "Shall I take her to the lock-up along with the big duffer?"

"No. Diamond Dick, Jr., will keep her a prisoner for a short time, and then we will let her go."

The old veteran passed into room 6.

There was no lamp in the room, but a sufficient amount of light drifted in from the hall to make the surroundings fairly distinct.

The form of a man, tied hand and foot, and with his head wrapped in a towel, was lying on the bed.

The old veteran quickly removed the towel and found that his suspicions were confirmed.

The prisoner was none other than Andy Griswold, the Little Ophir foreman.

"Dick, by all thet's good!" exclaimed Griswold.

"What's the cause of this, Andy?" asked Diamond Dick, as he untied the ropes which bound the miner.

"The main cause is thet I was a blame fool," Griswold replied, getting up from the bed and stretching his cramped limbs. "It was the one-eyed yap at the door, thet's who it was. As I give up my ticket, Jim Conroy, a friend o' mine, pushed inter the hall behind me an' asked what I was kerryin' in the bag. An' I told him it was forty pounds o' bullion. An' ye ort ter hev seen how thet grafter's one eye fired up when he socked it onter the canvas bag. He was behind it, an' I'll bet money."

"The bullion was taken?"

"Shore! The minit thet big duffer put out the lights, I was grabbed, hit a biff on the back o' the

head an' hauled off neck an' heels. When I come to I was hyer, with thet towel almost suffocatin' me."

"Was it the strong man that set upon you?"

"From the way my head is ringin' it must hev been a mighty powerful feller thet did the job, but I kain't tell fer sartin whether the strong man was the one er not. All I'm sure of is thet I was an ijut fer not takin' yore advice, Dick, an' totin' the bullion ter some place whar it would be safe. Now it's gone an' I'm out ten thousand cold. Whenever is a man old enough ter git sense?"

"Gle-ory ter snakes, Andy," spoke up the Californian, with a quiet grin, "some hombres ain't never old enough."

"Think I'm one of 'em, Harry?"

"I ain't a-sayin', but next time you warehouse yore boodle afore you go to a show."

"Ef I'm ever lucky enough ter hev as much boodle as thet ag'in, you kin bet I'll be keerful of it. But who'd hev thought these hyer actor fellers would hev made a play o' thet kind!"

"We may be able to get the bullion back, Griswold," observed Diamond Dick, stepping to the door of the room and motioning to young Diamond Dick to bring in the girl.

But Griswold only shook his head.

"She's gone, an' thar ain't no use deludin' myself with the idee thet I kin git holt of it ag'in."

The old veteran gave his attention to Zuleika.

Bertie had released her, upon bringing her into the room, and had posted himself in the doorway to guard against any attempt at escape.

Zuleika was rather pretty, and her black eyes glittered hatefully as they rested upon her captors.

"Do you know anything about this affair?" asked Diamond Dick, bending his searching eyes upon her.

"I know nothing at all," the girl retorted, "except that we have been shamefully treated."

"How many actors and actresses are there in the Nonpareil Specialty Company?"

"Eight."

"How many ladies?"

"Two."

"Is the strong man a relative of yours?"

"Yes."

"What relation?"

"He's my father."

"Who is the other lady?"

"Meg Lemoyne."

"What is her specialty?"

"Knife-throwing."

"Don't you know that your friends have committed robbery?"

"No. Somebody else has committed the robbery and you are laying it to us."

"How can you think that when all the company have disappeared, excepting you and your father?"

"They got out of the way to keep clear of trouble. We went broke in Tough Nut, and had to pledge our jewelry to get money to come on here. And now that we're here, you people are makin' it as hard for us as you can, and—and——"

Zuleika suddenly burst into tears and hid her face in her hands.

The Dicks, Handsome Harry and Andy Griswold exchanged astonished glances.

Could it be that the girl was innocent of any desire to do wrong?

Handsome Harry gave a grim smile and passed one hand over his left shoulder.

"Why did you and your father try to keep us from coming into this room?" Diamond Dick resumed.

"Dad said that Chet Bagsby, the manager of the company, was sick, an' that he was in here."

"Is Chet Bagsby the one-eyed feller?" inquired Andy.

Zuleika flashed the miner a melting glance out of her black eyes and nodded her head.

"You know, now, that Chet Bagsby wasn't here, don't you?" Diamond Dick went on.

"Yes."

"Well, that ought to convince you that something was wrong."

"Dad was fooled, that's all. If anythin's wrong, Chet's to blame, not dad or me. And yet you've gone and sent dad to jail!"

"Where did the Dutchman join your company?"

"Denver."

If Zuleika was shamming, she was a great deal better actress than she was a singer.

"Your story has a true ring," said the old veteran, "and I don't care to detain you. You may go."

"What'll you do with dad?" the girl asked, halting on her way to the door.

"That will depend on whether he's innocent or guilty in connection with this theft of gold."

"He didn't have anythin' to do with it."

"We'll find that out, if it's true."

Zuleika flounced out of the room, Bertie stepping aside to let her pass.

When opposite the young sport she gave him a quick look, and there was something of admiration in her eyes which did not fail to escape the old Serpent.

"Jumpin' sandhills!" chuckled Harry. "Ye took the dagger away from her, son, an' busted it, an' yit she seems ter think a heap o' ye fer what ye done."

Bung Loo was hanging about the hallway, and the old veteran, passing to the door, looked at the Chink and motioned after the girl.

Bung Loo nodded and took after her, understanding immediately what was expected of him.

"There's not much we can do toward recovering the bullion," observed Diamond Dick, turning to Andy Griswold, "except to search the town for any traces of this gang. The Chinese boy will follow the girl and soon demonstrate whether she is as innocent as she appears to be. In the morning I will have a talk with the strong man and see what I can learn from him. Meantime, you, and Diamond Dick, Jr., and Harry might drop in at the saloons, dance-halls and free-and-easies and see if you can discover anything."

This proposition was immediately acted upon, and the old veteran went to the Ouray hotel, where he had his headquarters.

He found Two-Spot waiting for him in the office. After telling Diamond Dick about the groans he had heard issuing from room 6, the New York kid had not followed, but had gone out and made a search of the town on his own hook.

The matter of the "rough-house" at the Kohinoor was the subject of a good deal of comment in the drinking places and gambling resorts, but Two-Spot neither heard nor saw anything which gave him a clew as to the whereabouts of the members of the company which had been holding forth in the concert hall.

He was, however, only looking for one of the actors, and that one was his old comrade, Fritz Dunder.

He knew that the Dutch boy must have had some hidden motive in joining this aggregation of grafters, and Two-Spot wanted to find out what it was.

As before stated, however, he was doomed to disappointment, and he finally went to the corral, where horses were kept for sale and for hire.

What he learned there took him back to the hotel in a hurry.

"How did you come out at room 6?" he asked.

The old veteran told him.

"Gee!" muttered the boy; "the strong guy and his pals have played a swift game. It was a hot touch for the bullion, and it looks as though they had made the raffle. But here's something, Diamond Dick, and it's a straight tip—I got it at the corral.

"A one-eyed bloke bought eight horses there, this afternoon, and paid down the mon in hard cash. About eight o'clock this g. m., the cayuses—that is, six of them—were ordered under saddle.

"The other two were loaded up with a lot of plunder that had been taken off the train that brought the Nonpareil outfit early in the afternoon.

"About nine o'clock, so the keeper of the corral said, five men rushed up, jest a-smokin', the one-eyed geezer in the lead.

"Jumping into the saddles, they made off at a keen run, leadin' the horse with the empty saddle an' the two pack animals."

"Which way did they go?" Diamond Dick asked.

"You can search me."

"Didn't the man at the corral know?"

"Nixey. He was poundin' his ear at the time, and only roused up as the men were gallopin' off. But he counted 'em, and he saw the bloke with the doused lamp—he'll swear to that."

"What kind of plunder was it that the pack-horses carried?"

"Some of it looked like bicycle wheels, and there was something that looked like a sail. That's the song the corral-keeper threw into me, but I thought he was dippy."

"Well," remarked Diamond Dick, "there's something in the wind, and the Nonpareil Specialty Company have got a new specialty up their sleeve which they are going to spring in mighty short order. They'll have to tip their hand before long, and then we'll know a good deal more than we do now."

"Sure," replied Two-Spot. "But think of Fritz floatin' around with these gazabus! Wouldn't it

upper-cut you? I'd give a bunch of the long green, right now, to know what Dutchy is up to."

The old veteran went upstairs to bed.

In the morning when he got up he saw a playing card tucked under the bottom of his chamber door.

It was the ace of clubs and was lying face up.

There was writing all around the pip, and the old veteran possessed himself of the card and read the following:

"Tiamont 'Tick: I am vorkin' der chob oof my life. Dot's righdt. Oof I vin oudt, I make a t'ousand tollars; oof I fail, dere vill be vone Dutchman less, und don'd you forget id. Oxcoose me for not making a recognition mit you, und Pertie, und Doo-Shpot, aber id vas imbossible. Gome righdt away mid yourseluf und der poys to der Painted Desert. Den vait und look oudt for der Fly-by-Nights. Someding hot und heafy iss going to habben. Dere vill be lifely dimes for eferybody, sure. FRITZ."

## CHAPTER IV.

### ON THE ROAD.

Just as old Diamond Dick finished reading Fritz Dunder's badly-spelled communication young Diamond Dick came hurrying down the hall and rapped at the door.

"Are you up, Diamond Dick?" asked the young sport.

"Just about," answered the old veteran. "What's wanted, Bertie?"

"Buck Keever is down in the office. He just brought word that the strong man made his escape some time during the night."

Diamond Dick muttered an impatient exclamation.

"How did he do it?"

"He twisted a bar from one of the windows."

"I told Keever he was as strong as a horse. He should have worn wrist and leg irons."

"He did have on the come-alongs, but twisted them apart and then bent the bar."

"That means that we shall have to catch him over again," said Diamond Dick, proceeding to get into his clothes.

"Keever is just going to take up the pursuit."

"Which way is he going to lay his course?"

"That's more than he knows. He thought perhaps we might like to go along with him."

"I reckon we won't go with Keever, Bertie, but we'll take him with us."

"How's that?"

"Read this and you'll understand all about it."

The old veteran pushed the playing card under the door.

Diamond Dick, Jr., stopped and picked it up and old Dick could hear his astonished whistle as he read Fritz Dunder's message.

"Where's Bung Loo?" the old veteran asked.

"I haven't seen him since you started him to following the girl. He's not in his room."

"Is Griswold around?"

"Yes."

"And Two-Spot and Harry?"

"They're both downstairs with Kever."

"Well, they'll make up our party. Have the horses sent around, Bertie."

Young Diamond Dick left at once to make ready for the start, and to show Fritz Dunder's communication to those below.

An hour later the Chinese boy had still failed to present himself, and Dick and his friends took to their horses and started on the long ride that was to bring them to the borders of the "Painted Desert."

There were six in the party—old and young Diamond Dick, Handsome Harry, Two-Spot Peters, Andy Griswold and Buck Kever.

Each man carried a Winchester in addition to his small arms, and had at his saddle cantle a sufficient supply of food to last for two days.

They were going into a country where there were no settled habitations, and where only an occasional prospector had the hardihood to venture.

Water would be scarce on the way, and the old veteran did not intend to go far from the last water hole on this side of the desert's edge.

The "Painted Desert" was a blistering stretch of sand, hard almost as a beaten floor, and supporting nothing but occasional clumps of greasewood brush, patches of cactus and a few stunted mesquite and yucca trees.

Here and there, throughout the solitary waste, could be found fantastic pillars of sandstone, rich in the various colors given by nature.

Some say that the name of the great plain was derived from these colored monuments; others that it came from the mirages often to be seen on the vast, waterless stretch, unrolling themselves like mighty canvasses to show the masterwork of the Great Artist—wondrous pictures that glowed with

transcendent beauty and faded utterly as by the touch of a magic wand.

"Thar's a purty long rim ter the Painted Desert," remarked Andy Griswold, as they loped along to make the most of the cool morning air, "an' thet Dutch pard o' your'n, Dick, don't say which part o' the rim we're ter make fer."

"We'll make for the point nearest to Ouray," the old veteran answered, briefly.

"That's about two miles beyond Casey's Well," put in Diamond Dick, Jr.

"There are mesquite beans for the horses at Casey's Well," returned old Diamond Dick, "and there we shall get our last water and forage."

Two hours after their start they passed a prospector, toiling along on foot, and driving his pack-burro before him.

They inquired whether he had seen the party for whom they were looking, and he answered that he had not, and asked for a "chaw of terbacker."

Handsome Harry handed over a plug, which when returned was minus about two square inches at one corner; and then the journey was resumed.

"They'll be keeful not ter let any one see 'em ef they kin help it," commented Harry. "Besides thet, I reckon the Fly-by-Nights was past this part o' the trail afore thet gold-hunter struck it. But hyer's somethin' thet's botherin' me, Dick."

"What is it, old pard?"

"Ef thet gang pulled out at nine o'clock, accordin' ter Two-Spot's say, how in blazes could Fritz be around ter poke thet keerd under yore door some time durin' the night?"

"He probably asked somebody else to put it under the door."

"Mebby not; mebbly the writin' on the keerd was faked up ter git us inter trouble, or ter send us off inter another part o' the kentry while these hyer Fly-by-Nights take their time in makin' themselves absent along some other trail."

"The writing isn't a forgery," said Diamond Dick, Jr.

"I should say nit," chimed in the New York kid. "The lingo belongs to Fritz all right, and it couldn't be counterfeited."

"I reckon thet's so," observed Handsome Harry.

The sun was now very hot, and the horses were fairly lathered with sweat.

In that country, where a man's life often depends

on the speed and endurance of his horse, it was the custom of the Dicks always to consider the comfort of their animals even before they did their own.

For this reason, speed was slackened as the heat increased and noon found the party but little more than two-thirds of the way to their destination.

A midday halt was made at a water hole, while the travelers executed an attack on their rations, and gave the horses an opportunity to browse on the scant grass.

After an hour, the journey was resumed.

"How about the Tough Nut Terrors?" inquired Andy Griswold. "Hev they been botherin' you fellers any lately, Diamond Dick?"

The Dicks had had a brush with a gang known as the "Terrors" not long before, and had captured the leader and several of his comrades.

"They haven't peeped since that skirmish we had with them over in the Mojave Canyon country," answered Diamond Dick.

"Gle-ory ter snakes an' kiboshes!" muttered Harry. "It's my opine thar ain't any of 'em left ter peep."

"Yes, there are, old pard," put in young Diamond Dick; "there are plenty of them left, but I reckon they're not anyways anxious to meet up with old Diamond Dick and his outfit."

The country through which the riders were galloping was of a hilly nature, and these uplifts would extend clear to the border of the desert.

The horses were headed through ravines and coulees, in order to avoid fatiguing climbs over the steep and cactus-covered rises.

As the little valleys angled in serpentine fashion, Diamond Dick and his party were compelled to cover many more miles than would have been necessary could they have followed a direct course.

The old veteran and the young sport were in the van of the riders, and as they galloped around a rocky spur they almost collided with the foremost men of another mounted party, riding in the opposite direction.

Owing to the grassy nature of the ravine, the fall of the horses' hoofs made little or no noise to apprise either party of the other's approach, and the meeting was in the nature of a startling surprise.

Horses were reined back until thrown almost upon their haunches.

After the first exclamation of surprise, the two out-

fits remained for a moment passively gazing at each other.

Old Diamond Dick's eyes flashed over the men ahead.

He saw that there were ten of them, that they were armed to the teeth, and that, if appearances counted for anything, they were freebooters and cutthroats of the very worst order.

Although the old veteran's acquaintance with the Nonpareil Specialty Company was of the very briefest kind, he was certain that these men had nothing to do with the actors who had fled from Ouray.

In this gang of ten there was no one-eyed man, no Fritz Dunder.

And then, of course, the bravos outnumbered the actors two to one.

"The Diming Dicks!" shouted a man in the lead of the roughs.

"The Diming Dicks!" echoed the riders behind him.

"Go fer 'em!"

"Hyer's our chance!"

"Revenge!"

"Show 'em thar's a few of the Terrors left yit!"

Then, in the wink of an eye, guns became trumps, and a red-hot scene was pushed into the grooves.

## CHAPTER V.

### THE SPECTRE SHIP.

Thus unexpectedly had old Diamond Dick and his friends come into contact with some of the Tough Nut Terrors who had still kept the field.

A crack of firearms broke upon the stillness of the valley, accompanied by tumultuous yells.

"Ride them down!" shouted old Diamond Dick, lifting himself in his stirrups and wielding a six-shooter in either hand.

As he voiced the command, he rattled his spurs and Nick-o'-the-Night, his horse, leaped straight toward the Terrors and their leveled weapons.

"Down with the train-wreckers!" cried Diamond Dick, Jr.

"Give 'em the crimp!" chimed in the New York kid, always well to the front whenever there was any trouble doing.

As for the Serpent of Siskiyou, he stood straight up in his stirrups, his red hair flying out behind him, waving his forty-fours.

"Gle-ory to snakes an' knockouts!" he bawled. "Hyer's old Diming Dick, the champeen gun-handler an' all-around outlaw tamer of the Pacific Slope, an' son Bertie, an' pard Harry, ripe an' ready fer a game of touch-an'-go! Wake up, snakes, an' sound yer rattles! Ole Dick an' his pards aire on the pike with the throttle wide open! Cl'ar the track er look out fer trouble! Whoop-ya!"

The Terrors did not last long, and the battle was over before it had fairly begun.

Nothing could have withstood the dashing charge of the old veteran, the young sport, and their companions.

After a short resistance, the outlaws broke and fled, leaving three of their number behind them.

Handsome Harry, Bertie and Keever gave pursuit, but Diamond Dick and Andy Griswold and Two-Spot remained behind.

Griswold's left arm had been scratched by a bullet, and while he sat in his saddle bandaging the wound with a handkerchief, the old veteran dismounted to have a look at the three 'Terrors' who had found it impossible to make off with their comrades.

Two of these were dead, and the third had but a few minutes left him.

"Who is the leader of your gang?" inquired Dick of the dying renegade.

"Ye'll find out afore ye're many days older," was the grim response. "Between us fellers an' you, Diming Dick, thar's war to the hilt. This hyer kentry ain't big enough fer us an' you—one or t'other hev got ter go ter the wall."

"What is your gang doing in this section?"

"Gatherin' up recruits. They'll hev enough men, next time they come down on ye, so'st ye won't hev no show at all."

"Where are they going to get recruits?"

"Oh, they'll git a plenty! Miners, cattlemen, road-agents, actors——"

"Actors?" interjected Dick, quickly.

"Thet's what I said."

"What actors?"

"Ask me no questions an' I won't tell ye any lies. Sabe?"

The man would not talk further, and he breathed his last just as Harry, Bertie and Keever came back.

"Consarn the varmints!" growled the Californian. "They know these hills like coyotes, Dick, an' give us the slip too easy. But we bagged three of 'em, an'

as many more stopped bullets of ours, so I opine we hev'n't got any kick comin'. Hurt, Andy?"

"Not enough ter speak about," Andy answered. "I think our side got off purty well considerin'."

"We rushed 'em," responded Bertie. "If we had simply stood our ground, their bullets would have done more execution."

"They lost their nerve," put in Keever, "when they found the Dicks going after 'em."

"Their hangout is up Mojave Canyon way," said Handsome Harry; "I wonder what they're doin' on this part o' the rode."

"It was safer for them to leave their old stamping ground than to stay there," said Diamond Dick, Jr.

"That's where they're wise," struck in Two-Spot.

"They had another object in view," observed Diamond Dick.

"What was that?" queried Keever.

"They came out here to get recruits, and expected to take in some actors. One of those men"—Diamond Dick waved his hand toward the three silent forms sprawled out on the ground—"put me onto the scheme."

"That's a pretty straight tip regarding the plans of the Nonpareil Specialty Company," said Diamond Dick, Jr.

"They're beginnin' well, by thunder if they ain't," added Andy Griswold.

"But what was all thet truck they was totin' along on the two led horses?" asked Harry. "Thar's a screw loose thar, an' I'll bet a poncho on it."

Keever laughed.

"It's a camp outfit," said he.

"Pass it up, Buck," said Two-Spot. "Did you ever see a camping outfit that had pneumatic-tired wheels?"

That silenced the sheriff and set them all to guessing.

Finally the old veteran asked Bertie to search the fallen outlaws.

This was done.

Aside from the ordinary personal property which such men might be supposed to carry, a small slip of paper was found on each one, each slip bearing the words, "White Rock."

This was singular, and suspicious on the face of it.

While the weapons of the fallen men were being appropriated, the old veteran sat his horse like a statue, his brow knotted into a thoughtful frown.

"I have it," he said, at last, his face clearing.

"The Terrors have been separated since the capture of their leader. Their new leader summoned them and they rendezvoused at White Rock. Perhaps, also, they were to meet the members of the Nonpareil Specialty Company at White Rock."

"Ye've struck it, pard!" cried Handsome Harry, bringing his right fist down in the palm of his left hand. "White Rock, as I remember it, is right at the border of the Painted Desert. This hyer is what they call sarcumstantial evidence."

"I think so," returned the old veteran, quietly, "and it's time for us to ride."

"How about those fellows?" queried Bertie, nodding toward the bodies of the three Terrors.

"Their companions will probably come back after them, when we're out of the way. Spurs and quirts, boys!"

Away they went at speed, and did not draw rein again until they found themselves at Casey's Well, the last water hole on their course.

It was five o'clock in the afternoon, and the horses were unsaddled and turned out to browse on the mesquite beans which hung thickly on the bushes about the well.

When eight o'clock came there was a full moon illuminating the hills almost with the brightness of day.

A three hours' rest had freshened up both the men and the horses, and the old veteran gave the order to saddle up.

After mounting, the animals were allowed to drink their fill and the start for White Rock was made.

This landmark capped the summit of a low hill and overlooked the wide reaches of the desert.

A stiff breeze was blowing, and now and then a straggling cloud was wafted across the moon, obscuring the surroundings.

White Rock was approached cautiously, but, although a circuit was made of the base of the hill, there were no signs of life observable at the summit.

"We'll ride to the top," said Diamond Dick, "and have a look across the desert."

The climb was fairly easy, and the party were soon at the summit, bunched together on the upper surface of the huge boulder, straining their eyes to pierce the distant gloom of the desert.

"I kain't see a bloomin' thing," grumbled Hand-

some Harry, after a silence broken only by the distant howls of the coyotes.

"Gee!" cried the startled voice of the New York kid; "I wonder if I'm dopy?"

"Why?" asked Diamond Dick, Jr., looking at the boy, who was gazing spellbound at a part of the desert which hugged the bordering hills.

"Look for yourself!" whispered Two-Spot, pointing. "Either I've gone off my trolley or else there's a ship—a one-master with all sails set an' comin' this way! Holy smoke!"

"The kid's right!" murmured the Californian, in an awed voice.

"A ship, sailin' acrost dry land!" said Andy Griswold, in tremulous tones. "It's a spector ship, an' we're doomed! D'ye hear? The hull pack of us aire doomed."

"The Flyin' Dutchman!" jerked out Kever.

Griswold whirled his horse to flee, but old Diamond Dick gripped the bridle.

"Steady!" said he. "Don't lose your nerve, Griswold. If it's a specter ship it can't harm any one. Watch it!"

All eyes were turned on the approaching vessel.

Without a sound, the great white sail bore the ship toward them through the moonlight.

There were men aboard of her—men silent as statues and seeming like ghosts in the pale moonbeams.

Not one of the crew spoke and the sight of the crafter, gliding across the solid earth as it might have sailed the sea, together with the awful stillness which reigned everywhere, was terrifying in the extreme.

Even the howls of the coyotes were hushed.

"Oh, gee! Oh, gee!" whispered Two-Spot, and then shut his teeth hard, knotted himself up in his saddle, and looked away.

## CHAPTER VI.

### THE "FLY-BY-NIGHT."

"A mirage!" said Bertie, between his teeth, watching the ship as though fascinated.

"No," returned Diamond Dick; "no one ever saw a mirage at night. To have a mirage you must have the sun."

"She's comin' straight fer us!" said Griswold, with chattering teeth.

"Let her come, Andy," answered the old veteran. "The closer she gets to us the better I'll like it."

As the mysterious vessel swept nearer, one of the figures aboard of her made a move and a sound was borne up to the watchers on the rock.

The sound was a flapping of canvas as the upper boom of the sail came slipping down the mast.

Then the jib was lowered, and the craft glided on with lessening momentum until she came to a dead stop under the hill.

On hearing these sounds and witnessing these movements, too earthly for the maneuvering of a ghost ship, the fears gradually left those on White Rock who were prone to superstition.

As if to dissipate their last remnant of fear, a voice floated up—a human voice if one ever spoke:

"Ahoy, the rock!"

"Ahoy, the boat!" returned old Diamond Dick, making a trumpet of his hands.

"Are you the Tough Nut Terrors?"

"Wall, I reckon! What ship is thet?"

The old veteran disguised his tone and assumed the vernacular of the frontier.

"The Fly-by-Night, with a black flag at the mast-head. Look!"

Simultaneously with the speaker's words, a roll of black bunting sped up to the top of the mast and blew out in the night wind.

The moonlight caught its surface and Dick and his pards saw a skull and crossbones embroidered on the banner.

"A pirate!" exclaimed Keever.

"Ay," came back from the ship, "the pirate of the desert, ready to raid all the diggings in the hills and evade pursuit by swooping across into Mexico! A lightning express couldn't catch us. We want to join your gang. Is Siwash Pete, your leader, with you?"

"Ef he ain't," returned Diamond Dick, "ye'll never see him. How many are ye?"

"Five men and a woman."

"We don't want no women!"

"You'll want me," cried a shrill voice, as a form in masculine attire stood up in the rear of the boat. "I'm Meg Lemoyne, Siwash, and I'm a crackerjack with a gun an' can throw a knife as straight as I can shoot a bullet."

"Wall, mebbey ye'll do," Dick resumed. "I thort thar was more to yer gang."

"There was another girl, but we didn't intend to bring her nohow."

"And another man," spoke up the voice of the first speaker, "the strong man, and the best of the lot. He was captured, but broke jail and is now at Hennepin's old shack, taking care of our horses. He had a night ride in a buckboard, from Ouray, and was about tuckered when he got to the shack, so we left him to rest up a bit."

"Yah, dot's righdt!" chimed in another voice. "Ve put der poat togedder at der shack, und den ve sailed so fast as I can't dell righdt along ofer here, und——"

"Shut up, Dutch!" interrupted the first voice, in a tone of authority. "I'll do the talking. Come down, Siwash! Let's palaver at closer quarters."

"Am I torkin' to Chet Bagsby?" asked old Diamond Dick.

"That's what you are. We made a clean run out of Ouray and lifted forty pounds of bullion before we left town. We're tenderfeet, but the Nonpareil Specialty Company aren't so young, after all. We'll show the Arizona hassayampers how Eastern ingenuity and up-to-date grafter methods will work in the Southwest. Come down!"

"We're comin'!" cried Diamond Dick.

The old veteran turned to his pards, and there was a bare suggestion of a chuckle in his voice as he proceeded in a whisper:

"If something doesn't happen, friends, we'll board the Fly-by-Night and capture the boat and the old crew. After me!"

But something happened.

When the riders were but little more than half way down the hill, a voice from somewhere yelled out:

"Their foolin' ye! They ain't the Terrors—they're the Diming Dicks! H'ist yer sails an' scoot fer yer lives!"

It must have been one of the routed Terrors who had made his way to the vicinity, stationed himself in some dark cranny of the hills and heard the entire conversation between Diamond Dick and Chet Bagsby.

Such a person must have given the alarm.

Instantly all was excitement aboard the Fly-by-Night.

Quick commands were given and the creak of the boom and the flutter of canvas could be heard as the sails were set.

A fusillade of shots was sent toward the hillside, and the shooting was kept up while the boat got under way and gathered speed.

It was a waste of ammunition, however, for Dick and his friends were descending in the shadow of the hill and could not be seen.

A wild whoop of disappointment went up from the Serpent of Siskiyou, and muttered exclamations fell from the lips of the old veteran and the young sport.

But for the alarm they would have made a short trail of it, and run in the men they were after with their customary celerity.

"Go it!" cried old Diamond Dick. "Let's make an attempt to overhaul the boat before it gathers headway!"

But the attempt was in vain.

Spurs and quirts were used unsparingly, when the surface of the desert was reached, but the Fly-by-Night, with all canvas set, bore away at a terrific speed, and could not have been caught by a railway train.

"No use," said Diamond Dick, drawing rein; "horses have their limitations and can't overtake a streak of lightning."

As the pursuers rounded to in a disappointed bunch and watched the receding outlines of the boat, the craft struck an obstruction of some kind—possibly a stone which had found its way to the desert from the hills.

Like a horse taking a hurdle, the Fly-by-Night leaped into the air and one of her crew, with a terrified yell, shot upward and outward and fell in a dark heap on the hard surface of the plain.

"Gle-ory to snakes an' skin of yer teeth!" jubilated Handsome Harry. "Thar's one o' the varmints left behind, anyhow."

"No loss without some small gain," remarked Dick, and spurred to the prostrate form at a gallop.

The form, by the time Dick and his friends arrived, was sitting up on the ground in a dazed way.

"Fritz Dunder!" exclaimed the old veteran.

"The Hot Tamale!" added the young sport.

"I'm a farmer if it ain't Wienerwurst!" said the New York kid. "He took a header and went overboard. Ain't this the funniest ever?"

## CHAPTER VII.

### FRITZ DUNDER'S GAME.

"Ach, du lieber!" exclaimed the bewildered Dutchman, rubbing his head.

"How do you feel, Dutch?" asked Two-Spot, jumping down from his horse and hurrying to Fritz Dunder's side.

"I feel like I had fell off mit a gomet und—und — Say, pinch me vonce so dot I know I'm alive."

The New York kid pinched the Hot Tamale and the latter gave a yell.

"I'm alive, all righdt."

"How did it happen, Dutchy?" asked Handsome Harry.

"Schust how dit it habben makes no odds aboutt der tifference. Here I vas, und I feel like a haluf of t'irty cents. Yah, dot's righdt. Dit you see me go oop into der air like some skyrockets?"

"We saw you all right, Fritz," said Diamond Dick, Jr.

"Shiminy grickets! Say, dot vas der vorst trop vat I efer took mit meinseluf. Himmelblitzen!"

Fritz got up slowly and reached for his hat.

"Doo-Shpot," said he, "shake! Und Pertie, und olt Tiamondt Tick, und Hantsome Harry. Ach, dis vas like olt times some more. You vill oxcoose me for nod gifin' you der ciful greet at der show, but I vas playin' a game, und dere was a t'ousand tollars in der game for me. Und dot's der reason I played so vell as I vas aple."

Fritz shook hands all around, and was introduced to Buck Keever and Andy Griswold.

"It's quite a surprise to see you out here in Arizona, Fritz," said Diamond Dick.

"Vell, I'm glad dot I vas here, und dot's all apoudt id. Sooch a long time id vas since ve met oop mit each odder, yes. Und so many dings haf habbened. Ach, vat a head id iss! I feel like my prains vas made indo mincemeat."

"How's your wife, Fritz?" inquired Diamond Dick, Jr.

"She run away mit anodder man, t'auks."

Keever and Griswold let out a whoop at this.

"Dot vas der best ding vat efer habbened by me," Fritz explained. "Dot voman vas der boss und all hants. Id vas tangerous for me to be safe, und if it vasn't vone ding id vas doo, all der dime. Ach, id vas a habby tay for little Fritz ven Katrina shkipped

mit der proom-peddler. I dell you vone ding, chentlemen."

"Then cough it up, Dutchy," said Harry, "an' don't hang fire."

"I pet der proom man vill be sorry. Und he has got so many prooms—schust dink oof dot! He sent her a proom vonce, pefore dey shkipped, und mit der proom he sent Katrina a liddle node, vich hat some rhymes like vat I tell you here:

" 'Katrina, take dis proom,  
Id gomes from your pest friend;  
In sunshine use der prushy part,  
In shtorms der odder end.'

"Und I bed you someding for noddin', chentlemen, dot der proom man vill abbreviate dot poedry like anyding!" and Fritz laughed till he almost tumbled off his feet.

"What is the game you're trying to play, Fritz?" asked Dick.

"Vell, I haf id aboutt played, Tiamont Tick."

"How's that?"

"You see, I haf all der odder feller's drums, und all I got to do now is to get der odder feller himself und den he vill be euchered der vorst you efer see. I guess id vas all righdt dot I fell off der poat. Meppy I couldn't haf got away so easy any odder vay—und dot vasn't so easy, neider."

"Tell us what your game was, Fritz," said Bertie.

Fritz unbuttoned his coat and vest and removed from the lining of the latter garment a long, seal pocketbook.

"Dere iss ten thousand tollars vort' oof Goferment ponds in dot," said he, waving it above his head triumphantly.

"Gwan!" exclaimed Two-Spot. "You've gone off the jump. Little Bright-Eyes has been smokin' a strong brand of dope, Dick."

"Nod on your din-dype! Tiamont Tick, look at der pocketbook."

The old veteran took the wallet and opened it.

In order that he might examine the contents to better advantage he struck a match.

"Right you are, Fritz," said he.

"Sure ding. I know vat I know, und don'd you forget dot. I ain't mooch oof an actor-man——"

"You're right there, anyhow," struck in Two-Spot.

"Sure. I can't act like some odder fellers, but I'm some corksers at dis detective racket."

"What's this lettering on the pocketbook?" inquired Diamond Dick. "There's L. A. Fitzgerald, in gold script, on the inner flap."

"Dot's Misder Fitzgerald, der banker, yes," replied Fritz, complacently.

"The man that lost the book?"

"Id vas shtole, he didn't lose it. He lifes in Tenver. Dot's vere der ponds vas shtole."

"Round up yer thinker and give it to us, Dutch," said the New York kid, impatiently. "Quit chewin' the rag, can't you?"

"Vell, den, here id iss:

"Ven my liddle Katrina run away mit der proom-man"—Fritz paused to chuckle over the reminiscence—"ven she vent away mit dot poor deluded feller, I had noddin' but my intependence, so I shtarted for Arizona to choin der Ticks.

"I tramped ofer der ties, und rode on der pumpers, und der plind paggage, und in dose side-toor Pullmans, und so I got to Tenver."

"If you had dropped me a line, Fritz," said young Diamond Dick, "I would have sent you the money to come on."

"Ach, Pertie, I know dot! You vas der best friend vat efer I had, und you'd haf done dot for your liddle Fritzzy. But I had sooch a pad attack oof intependence dot it shtruck in. I vanted to make my own vay.

"Vell, as I saidt, pymepy I get me to Tenver. Und der, vone nighdt, vile I vas loogin' for a goot place in some alley to shleep, I hear me a cry, 'Helup!' Schust like dot. 'Helup!'

"Somepody iss gedding id in der neck, I says to meinseluf, und I run shtrait for der shpot und see a man laying on der sidewalk und anodder man takin' someding from his pocket.

"Now, Pertie knows dot I'm a reg'lar cyclone ven I durn loose mit my handts. I durned loose den, but id vasn't ke Vick enough. Der ropper handed me a teaser righdt between der eyes, und I didn't make oudt noddin' except dot der ropper had only vone eye.

"Der police gome runnin' oop und arrested me, but der man on der ground said I vasn't der feller. I heardt him gif his name to der policemans und I vent away.

"Next tay I called on Misder Fitzgerald and ask him vat vas in der pocketbook dot vas shtole. He say dere vas ten thousand tollars in Goferment ponds.

"'Vat you gif me oof I find der t'ief und ged der ponds pack?' I says. Und he say, 'Vone t'ousand tollars.' So dot's id. Dere's der game. I vas to look for der man mit der vone eye.

"Und luck vas mit der Hot Tamale. I vent to choin a gang oof blayers, so dot I could get ofer der gountry kevicker as I vas doing, und ven I saw der manager, you could haf knocked me town mit a fed-der ven I saw dot he hat only vone eye!

"I choined der gompany, und ven I vasn't on der stage I vatched der vone-eyed man like some hawks, I bed you.

"Vell, I foundt me oudt pooty soon dot he vas der vone, und dot der gompany vas a lod oof deadt-peats und grafders. Dey saidt dot dey vas goin' to choin some Derrors oudt in Arizony, und dey ask me vould I go along und choin, doo. I say, 'Yah, you bed I vill.'

"Durin' der rumpus lasdt night I found vere Chet Pagsby carried der vallet, und I laid for it.

"Vile der poat vas bein' put togedder in Hennepin' shack, I got my hants on der ponds, und den ve shtarted for der Vite Rock to meet mit der Derrors, und—— Vell, you know der rest oof it, so dot——"

So interesting was the Dutch boy's recital that Dick and his friends had tarried at the edge of the desert when they should have been elsewhere.

This fact was suddenly brought home to them, for the hoarse "sping" of a Winchester echoed out on the night air and a bullet whizzed past the old veteran, dangerously close to his head.

Without pausing an instant, Diamond Dick wheeled his horse and started for the hills, laying his course toward the point from which the bullet had come.

"Take up Fritz behind you, Two-Spot," Diamond Dick called back. "The man who fired that revolver is, I think, the one who gave the alarm. If possible, we must catch him."

## CHAPTER VIII.

### BUNG LOO "FEATURES" HIMSELF.

Although a quick but thorough search of the hills was made, the Terror who had attempted the "sniping" operation was not located.

After the search, Dick and his friends came together at a spot which they had agreed upon before separating.

"What's ther next number on the programme, Dick?" inquired Handsome Harry.

"We'll put out for Hennepin's shack," answered the old veteran. "That's the place from which this Fly-by-Night crowd started, isn't it, Fritz?"

"Dot's der blace."

"And they brought the boat out from Ouray on those two led horses?"

"Sure."

"Then we'll start for the shack. It's a little late for a successful try at the Specialty Company in that quarter, but there's nothing else to be done."

The old veteran and the young sport took the lead, Fritz and Two-Spot riding between them.

"Where did these actors get the boat, Fritz?" Bertie inquired, as they galloped along.

"Chet Pagsby iss an invendor, und he had it made. He's a mighty shmardt feller, dot Chet Pagsby, but I vas shmarder as he vas."

"What was his object, Fritz?"

"Schust vat he tolt you, Tiamont Tick, vile you vas on der Vite Rock. He vas goin' to turn pirate, rop eferypody he could, und den, ven dey run after him, he vas goin' to shteer der poat indo Mexico."

"He would have encountered a stretch of country, before he got to Mexico, which his boat couldn't have gotten over."

"Den he intended to haul it mit horses."

"Ef anybody had a-told me thet a boat on wheels could hev run on this hyer Painted Desert," said Andy Griswold, from behind, "I'd have thought the feller was stringin' me."

"It's a peculiar proposition," remarked Diamond Dick, "but because it's strange that's no reason it isn't feasible."

"Truth is stranger than fiction," remarked young Diamond Dick.

"Always," added the old veteran, emphatically.

Hennepin's shack was a lonely outpost on the desert's rim.

Hennepin was dead, and the water hole by which his habitation had been reared was dry, but still occasionally the old adobe house furnished shelter for some belated miner or prospector who was fortunate enough to have with him a supply of food and water.

It was nearly one o'clock in the morning when the little shack was sighted.

A precautionary survey, made by Diamond Dick and his friends from a nearby elevation, gave no glimpse of the Fly-by-Night, nor of the horses sup-

posed to have been left there in charge of the escaped prisoner, the modern Hercules.

"Just as I thought," muttered Diamond Dick. "We're too late."

"Ef we hadn't stopped ter listen ter Fritz Dunder's yarn," observed the old Serpent, "we might have got hyer in time."

"Hardly," spoke up Diamond Dick, Jr. "The Fly-by-Night steered straight for this place, and would have warned the strong man to pack up and get away before we could fairly have taken the trail, no matter how rapidly we would have followed."

"Let's go town und haf a look aroundt," suggested Fritz. "Oof they got away in a hurry, meppy dey left someding behindt."

The shack, however, was found to be entirely empty.

After some deliberation, it was decided that Diamond Dick, Jr., Two-Spot, Fritz and Andy should return to Casey's Well with the horses, water them and let them feed and rest, returning to Hennepin's shack by sunrise.

The old veteran, the Serpent of Siskiyou and the sheriff were to remain at the adobe hut and keep watch for any chance signs of the actor-gang or the Terrors.

If there was to be a race with the horses pitted against the Fly-by-Night—an event by no means impossible—if the wind was light, and the horses in good fettle, the race might be won by the Dicks.

But, whether or no there was to be such a race, caution demanded that the animals be kept at the top-notch of preparedness.

So Diamond Dick, Jr., with his three aides, spurred away, and Diamond Dick, Harry and Keever finished out the night at the shack, taking turns at watching, two of their number sleeping while the third stood guard in the doorway.

At daylight, as it happened, the Californian was the one on sentry duty.

The old veteran was sleeping soundly—he could keep awake as long as it pleased him, but when ready for slumber, no perils, at hand or prospective, ever interfered with his rest—when, suddenly, the voice of the Serpent of Siskiyou echoed loudly through the hut.

In a flash, Diamond Dick and Keever were on their feet, gripping their shooting irons.

"Who is it?" asked Keever; "the Terrors?"

"It's the other outfit, I reckon," the old Serpent replied. "Come out hyer an' see what ye think, Dick."

Dick and Keever left the hut and followed Harry's pointing forefinger with their eyes.

Off across the desert could be seen the white, leg-of-mutton sail of the Fly-by-Night.

Only the upper part of the sail could be seen. The wind was fair, but the boat was moving to and fro in a most peculiar manner, and several times the wheeled bark was brought up into the wind with a suddenness that almost capsized it.

"Must be a new hand at the helm," remarked Keever.

"Either thet," responded Harry, "or else they're maneuverin' with the idee of findin' out whether the coast is clear fer them ter come up ter the shack."

"They could maneuver better than that, it seems to me," spoke up Diamond Dick. "Anyhow, with all the bungling, the boat is drawing nearer and nearer."

"Thar!" exclaimed Harry; "she's comin' up right in line with the wind. Jumpin' sandhills, see her scoot!"

The boat leaped away like a frightened race horse, bearing straight for the shack.

As it drew nearer, the surprise of the three watchers was intense when they discovered that there was only one man in the boat, and he appeared to be having all manner of trouble, jumping back and forth and hopping up and down like a pea on a hot griddle.

"Thunderation!" shouted Harry. "It's the— No, it ain't! Why, darn my buttons, it's the Chink!"

"Bung Loo, without a doubt," said the puzzled veteran.

"How in the ripping blazes does he happen to be aboard the Fly-by-Night?" cried Keever.

"We'll have to leave that for him to explain," answered the old veteran.

"He acts as though he was scart to death," remarked Keever.

Bung Loo—for he it was—caught sight of his friends at the shack and his joy was intense.

They could see him throw up one arm and could hear him yell, but he was too far away as yet for his words to be distinguished.

Finally the boat came sweeping abreast of Dick and his friends.

"Stopee junk!" whooped Looey. "China boy no

can stop. Him Melican devil! China boy no can stop!"

The old Serpent made a lunge at the wheeled contrivance, and was jerked head over heels.

But he hung on long enough to slacken the craft's speed so that the old veteran could leap aboard.

Then Bung Loo, seeing that he was safe, gave a gasp and sank chattering down on the stern seat.

He had had the time of his life.

## CHAPTER IX.

### HOW BUNG LOO GOT THE BOAT.

Mademoiselle Zuleika was not staying at the Kohinoor Hotel, but at a private boarding-house kept by a Mexican on the outskirts of Ouray.

The strong man, knowing the lawless acts which were to occur, did not wish to get his daughter mixed up in them any more than he could possibly help, and this was his reason for having Zuleika put up at the Mexican's hangout, and not at the hotel where the rest of the company were staying.

The Chinese boy, in his role of shadower, followed the girl to the Mexican's, saw her vanish inside, and then set himself to watching with lynx-eyed vigilance.

Two hours passed and then the strong man presented himself.

The big fellow had been allowed by Kever to don his clothes before his removal to the jail, and, because of this, Looley did not recognize him.

The strong man knocked at the door of the house, was presently admitted, and shortly afterward Gonzales, the proprietor, came out.

Gonzales went to the barn, and was busy there for several minutes.

When he reappeared he was driving a buckboard, drawn by two tough little horses.

There were two seats in the buckboard, and Gonzales, after halting the team at the door, gave a low whistle.

The strong man appeared.

"Wait a minit," said he, and drew back into the house again.

Gonzales got down, hitched the team to a post and disappeared into the house himself.

The voice of the big man gave Bung Loo his first suspicion that the fellow might be the modern Hercules.

Wondering how the strong man could be there, after having been locked up in jail, the Chink decided to go with him and find out all he could regarding the escaped prisoner's plans.

To get under the rear seat of the buckboard required only a moment, and when Zuleika and her father came out, unhitched the horses and climbed into the wagon and drove away, they carried the Celestial with them.

A rapid drive and a long one followed.

The boy kept his eyes and ears wide open, but he could see nothing and could hear only an occasional scrap of conversation.

The buckboard was a rattletrap, and needed greasing badly, and it was the noise which it made that made it impossible for the Chink to learn much of what the two on the front seat were saying.

But he managed to discover that the strong man's great strength had enabled him to escape, and that he was going to join the rest of the company.

Zuleika was to go with him and bring back the buckboard.

The girl and her father talked much and for the most part with passionate earnestness.

Zuleika seemed to be arguing with her father, who was not open to persuasion.

Finally the girl burst into tears, and there followed a long silence, during which Bung Loo most unaccountably fell asleep.

When he awoke, the buckboard was standing still, and he peeked out from under the seat.

The strong man and his daughter were not in the wagon, nor were the horses attached to it.

A little distance away there was an adobe house, and over the top of the house the Chinese boy could see the upper part of a triangular bit of canvas.

He was puzzled to account for the sail, for, of course, he hadn't the least knowledge about the wheeled craft with which he was later to have such an exciting experience.

Of one thing he was positive, however, and that was that the buckboard was no place for him; so he climbed out and darted into the brush that bordered the foot of the hill not far from the house.

There were people in the house—he could hear them talking—and as he lay in hiding and tried to figure out how the strong man had unhitched the team without ever discovering what was under the rear seat, his teeth went on edge and began to chatter.

He would have to look sharp, or the Melican men would get; and if they got him—— Whoosh! There would be one Chink less to go back to the Flowery Kingdom.

Presently, just as daylight began to break, a one-eyed man came out of the house and skulked into the brush, less than two yards from where the boy was hiding.

At first, Bung Loo was sure the man was coming for him, but he was soon undeceived.

The man was carrying a heavy canvas bag, and he placed it in the midst of a clump of mesquite and carefully arranged the brush so that the presence of the bag could not be detected by any chance passer.

Then the man went away again.

This peculiar proceeding set Bung Loo to thinking.

He recognized the one-eyed man as the person who had taken his ticket at the door of the Kohinoor Concert Hall.

Coupling this knowledge with the fact that forty pounds of bullion had been stolen by the Nonpareil Specialty Company, it did not take the Celestial long to reach the conclusion that he had seen the leader of the gang hide his booty; nor did it take Looey much longer to remove the bag and place it elsewhere.

It pleased the Chinese boy to think that he had accomplished something, and he returned to watching the house with a great deal more confidence in himself.

Sounds of hammering came from in front of the hut, and people were passing in and out continually.

The waiting was extremely tedious, especially as it was done on an empty stomach.

About noon, as near as Bung Loo could judge from the vertical position of the sun, the strong man came out, went back into the hills and presently reappeared with the two horses that had drawn the buckboard.

The horses were hitched to the wagon, and Zuleika came out of the house, climbed to the front seat and drove away alone.

Her eyes were red, as though she had been crying, and she did not say good-by to her father, or even look at him.

After she was gone, the one-eyed men and several others joined the strong man and went up into the hills in the direction from which the strong man had led the horses.

They were gone for quite a while.

As no sounds whatever came from the house, Bung Loo was satisfied that there was no one there, so he crept out cautiously, darted across the open stretch and entered the hut.

After a brief search he found what he wanted—food in the form of crackers and cheese and dried beef.

Possessing himself of a generous supply of the eatables, he scurried back into the bushes, never pausing to give any attention to the queer-looking craft which was moored, with sails furled, close to the end of the house.

After satisfying his hunger, Bung Loo felt even more like himself.

He had done good work for the Dicks, of that he felt sure, and if he minded his p's and q's it was possible he might do more.

Toward evening, the one-eyed man and his friends—all excepting the strong man—came back to the house and the Chink saw them pull the Fly-by-Night around to the other side of the shack and work about her as though putting on the finishing touches; then as night began to fall the astounded boy observed all hands get aboard, hoist sail and glide away.

What sort of a monster was it, anyhow?

Bung Loo's knees trembled, and he was more than half inclined to take to his heels.

The minutes dragged by, the moon came out bright and clear, and still the Celestial waited, hoping the monster would come gliding back.

His hopes were destined to be realized; and when the monster returned it came with a rush, and there was excitement among all hands.

Some hurried into the house, others rushed away toward the place where the strong man had gone, and still others anchored the monster with a rope to one corner of the shack.

The sails were not lowered, for some reason or other, and the boy, from his place of concealment, could hear the machine tugging and groaning in its attempt to spring the leash and dart away.

What was going on?

A wild fear took possession of the boy's heart.

They had heard, in some way, that he was spying upon them, and they were making ready to beat about the brush, find him and give him the bastinado or the bowstring—perhaps both.

Leaping out of the bushes, Bung Loo started off helter-skelter along the trail taken by the buckboard.

He had not run a dozen paces, however, before a number of horsemen came galloping into sight, directly in front.

They caught sight of him, and gave vent to fierce yells.

Terror-stricken, the lad turned back and ran to the house.

There were people in the hut—he could hear them—but they were not yet aware of his presence.

What should he do? The monster was on one side and his foes on the other.

Figuratively speaking, he was between the devil and the deep sea.

The monster was still creaking and tugging at its hawser and Looey chose what he thought was the least of two evils.

Jerking a knife from under his blouse, he slashed it through the rope; instantly the monster started and the Chink, his heart thrashing against his ribs, grabbed at the stern of the craft and managed to get aboard.

Nor did he accomplish this an instant too soon, for the people in the house, their attention attracted by the noise and shouts of the horsemen, rushed out.

Their boat, her helm lashed so as to drive her straight ahead, was standing out into the desert, with a Chinaman, scared out of his wits, lying across the stern.

Pursuit was given, but the futility of attempting to chase the Fly-by-Night had already been demonstrated, and the craft passed out of sight.

For some time Bung Loo lay where he had fallen, palpitating with fear and unable to move.

Finally the boat crashed into something and came to a halt.

Lifting himself to his knees, Bung Loo saw ahead one of the fantastic pillars of colored sandstone fringed about its base with a growth of greasewood.

The boat, with no hand to guide her, had run straight into the obstacle, the shock of collision deadened by the bushes.

Here, under the lee of the sandstone column, the sails of the Fly-by-Night flapped idly and Bung Loo, hopping out, started to run.

When he had reached a safe distance, he turned about and scanned the odd craft.

Gradually, as he studied it, recollections flitted through his brain of the junks which used to sail up and down the Yangtsekiang River, in far-away China.

This monster was a junk, a devil junk fabricated by Melican men to sail the land instead of the sea.

Emboldened to return, the boy studied the machine at close quarters, and finally, having made up his mind, he crept aboard and cuddled himself up for a sleep.

In a few hours, before it was yet day, he awoke, unlashed the tiller of the craft, disentangled it from the brush with some difficulty, and then leaped in and started on a cruise.

The Fly-by-Night was hard to manage, and his fear gradually came back to him.

He could steer it so as to avoid various obstacles in his course, but he couldn't stop it, and he was going at such a rate that he didn't want to jump out for fear of breaking his neck.

If he could neither stop nor get off what was going to become of him?

After a trying period of sailing and tacking, he suddenly sighted the house where he had been the day before.

There were three people in front of it, and he made them out to be old Diamond Dick, Harry and Keever.

His heart gave a bound, and he headed straight for his friends.

A little while and the old veteran was aboard, the sails had been lowered, and the Fly-by-Night was in port again.

It is safe to say that Bung Loo had never before undergone such an experience. It was something to think about for the remainder of his life.

## CHAPTER X.

### THE "CANNON-BALL SPECIAL."

Of course, Bung Loo had to explain everything to his friends, and his story received corroborative detail from the fact that the bullion belonging to the Little Ophir was found exactly where the Chink had cached it.

"Ye're a loo, Looey," averred the old Serpent, slapping the Celestial on the back of his silk jacket. "I kin hear Two-Spot tellin' ye so."

"He's a brick, a yellow brick!" added Keever.

"He'll do for one of my pards," smiled old Diamond Dick.

The Fly-by-Night, as the old veteran now saw it at close quarters, was some eighteen feet long and ten feet beam.

The mast was fifteen feet in the air.

The steering contrivance was similar to that used on a hook-and-ladder truck.

There were two pneumatic-tired bicycle wheels forward, at the widest part, and two smaller wheels behind.

"It's well constructed," remarked old Diamond Dick, "and is certainly a credit to the man who made it, despite the fact that he was going to use the machine in a discreditable way."

"She's a daisy, all right," averred the admiring Keever.

"Pull down that black flag, Keever," said Dick; "from now on the Fly-by-Night will cease to be a pirate."

"We'll call her somethin' else besides the Fly-by-Night, pardy," observed the Californian as Keever hauled down the emblem bearing the skull-and-cross-

bones. "From now on she's Diamond Dick's Cannonball Special."

"Bully!" cried the sheriff. "The Cannonball Special! That's a name for your life!"

At that instant a beat of hoofs was heard along the valley in the rear of the house.

"Hyer comes the son of his dad with the animals!" cried Handsome Harry. "I opine it'll be a knocker fer him ter find that we've got holt o' this hyer ship o' the desert."

The craft was hauled out to a point where it would be in plain view of the party when they galloped out of the ravine; and hardly was the Cannonball Special in position when the riders appeared.

"Great blazes!" whooped Keever; "that ain't the young sport and his pards! It's—it's—by thunder, it's the gang of Terrors, an' there's more'n a dozen of 'em!"

This was indeed the fact.

Recognizing the old veteran and his friends, the Terrors, led by Siwash Pete, gave vent to exultant yells, and pressed their horses to a faster gait.

"Lift that bullion aboard, Harry!" commanded Diamond Dick. "Now that we've got the boat we'll put her to good use. Is there anything of ours in the house, Keever?"

"Not a thing," replied the sheriff.

"Then pull at that rope, there, and hoist the jib. Bung Loo, bear a hand here and help pull up the mainsail. Look alive, Harry! They'll be on us in a minute!"

The old veteran spoke hurriedly but calmly, and the bullion was thrown aboard, Handsome Harry scrambled to a position forward by the mast alongside of Keever, and Bung Loo and the old veteran took seats in the stern.

Noting the preparations which Dick and his friends were making to sail out of trouble, Siwash Pete and his followers turned loose with their guns, and more than one bullet slapped through the sail.

But the breeze had freshened, the sails bellied out, and the Cannonball Special swooped off across the desert like a hawk.

The discomfited Terrors were left behind, gazing after the desert ship in wondering amaze.

"They came down to the shack to join the Nonpareil people, I reckon," laughed Diamond Dick. "It's lucky for us, Looey, that you showed up with this craft just when you did; otherwise we would have been obliged to take refuge in the shack and fight those fellows off."

"I wonder ef the son of his dad has had a mix-up with the varmints?" asked Harry, in a worried tone.

"Trust Bertie to take care of himself and the horses, if he did," old Diamond Dick answered, confidently. "Don't fret, Harry. Enjoy yourself. Do you realize that we're plugging along at a fifty-mile-an-hour gait?"

Harry hadn't realized it, but he soon began to do so.

They were going at hair-raising speed, darting through the greasewood and cactus clump, and here and there dodging an occasional yucca tree.

Horned toads and lizards scurried out of their way, and one rattlesnake, unable to crawl swift enough, was crushed beneath the rubber-tired wheels.

On and on they sped, paying little notice to the lapse of time in the enjoyment of the exhilarating ride.

But suddenly, far off on the horizon, they glimpsed a company of horsemen, looking like five black dots against the gray of the sandy waste.

As they looked, the five dots got into rapid motion, laying a course directly toward them.

"The Nonpareil gang!" exclaimed Keever.

"Lie flat down under the gunnel, Harry, you and Keever!" cried Dick. "Quick! Bung Loo, take the helm! Keep the boat headed straight for the grafters! We'll try a trick and bring matters to a swift finish."

"Whatee you do?" asked the Chinese boy.

"Watch and you'll find out," was the short response.

A second later and Bung Loo, to all appearances, was the only occupant of the Cannonball Special. Flat on the bottom of the craft were lying old Diamond Dick, Harry and Keever, revolvers in hand and ready.

Without a pause, the boat flew on toward the grafters who were racing to meet it, unconscious of the fate that was in store for them.

## CHAPTER XI.

### A WHOLESALE CAPTURE.

"Stop!" roared Chet Bagsby, leveling a rifle at Bung Loo's head when the boat drew near.

The Nonpareil gang had reined in their horses and were waiting.

"No shootee, no shootee!" wailed Bung Loo. "You can takee junk! Me no wantee junk! No kill China boy!"

"Then stop the boat!"

"Can do! can do!"

And Bung Loo, who had seen how old Diamond Dick handled the sails, loosened the ropes and the canvas came down with a rush.

The boat, when its momentum was exhausted, came to a halt in the midst of the grafters, all of whom had dismounted and hurried forward.

In a flash, Diamond Dick, Harry and Keever arose from their hiding-places, each with two revolvers, which they pushed into the faces of the astounded robbers.

Bung Loo likewise switched aside the front of his silk blouse and brought out a brace of shooters.

"Surrender!" shouted the old veteran. "Make a move to raise a gun and you're dead men!"

The four in the boat were covering five, but they were doing it effectively.

"H-h-how does this come?" cried Bagsby, blinking his solitary eyes.

"It's the fate that comes to every grafter who operates in Diamond Dick's territory!" replied the old veteran.

"Throw down your guns!" commanded Keever. "I'm the sheriff of Ouray County, and you're all my prisoners."

There was a moment of indecision, and then four of the five developed their guns and flung them sullenly to the earth.

One, a slightly-built individual, took a knife from its sheath and seemed about to cast it after his guns.

A second later the knife leaped from the hand that held it and its point would have struck the old veteran had he not dodged sideways.

Whizzing past, the blade buried itself in the side of the boat.

"You're a woman," said old Diamond Dick, fixing his eyes on the thrower of the knife, "and your sex saves you. If you were a man, however, your life would pay for that act of treachery."

While this little drama was being enacted the old Serpent was having a time with the strong man.

The latter persistently refused to disarm himself, and at last fired a point-blank shot at the Californian.

Could he have used the revolver as well as he juggled cannonballs, undoubtedly Handsome Harry's life would have paid the forfeit.

But the modern Hercules was a poor marksman, and the bullet went wild.

Before the big fellow could fairly realize what had happened, Harry had sprung out of the boat and knocked the revolvers from his hands.

Instantly there ensued a boxing match, finally ending in a clinch and a wrestle, which proved to be the finest thing of the kind that old Diamond Dick, or Keever, or Bung Loo, or any of the prisoners had ever seen.

Harry was noted for his muscle and prowess, and the old veteran had seen him wrestle with so-called strong men before.

But here was a man who could bend horseshoes and prison bars, and snap himself free of handcuffs, and the battle that followed was a battle royal, with two Titans as central figures.

Never had the huge Californian ever been so put to it.

Once he was thrown, but before both his shoulders touched the ground he was up again as though raised by springs.

Next time he all but floored his man; and then, for a moment, he came near to falling a victim for the second time.

But at last, with a tremendous exertion, he flung his big antagonist clear over his head and landed him with a thump on the ground.

The strong man was jarred and stunned, and before he recovered Handsome Harry had completed his work by tying a riata about his hands.

"Lead one of those horses here!" panted Harry, directing the command at Bagsby.

Bagsby obediently brought the horse, four men lifted the modern Hercules into the saddle, and he was tied there, and so found himself when his wits returned to him.

All the other prisoners were likewise secured, their own riatas being used for the purpose, Bagsby and one of the lightest of his men being temporarily mounted on one animal. The other horse Harry had reserved for himself, each horse being secured to a riata which ended at Harry's saddle pommel.

"Gle-ory to crawlers!" shouted Harry, exultantly. "It didn't take us long ter wind up this gang o' barnstormers when we once found 'em, did it? Git inter the Cannonball Special, Dick, an' start the machine fer White Rock, or fer Hennepin's shack, wherever ye think we'll be most likely ter meet up with the son of his dad. Never worry about me—I'll pike along an' deliver the goods all O. K."

Old Diamond Dick, Keever and Bung Loo got into the boat, and by using a fraction only of the sail capacity managed to go slow enough to keep the old Serpent and his five prisoners within easy hail, so that, if there was any trouble, they might be close enough to render aid.

But there was no trouble whatever.

The Nonpareil Company were amateur grafters, as could plainly be seen by the extreme readiness with which they all, excepting the strong man, lost their nerve.

The fight was completely taken out of them.

At Hennepin's shack, where the party arrived in an hour's time, young Diamond Dick, Andy Griswold, Two-Spot and Fritz were found with the horses.

They had seen nothing of Siwash Pete and his Terrors, so it was inferred that the gang had hastily departed for other places.

Fearing, however, that there might be an attack made for the purpose of rescuing the Nonpareil people, old Diamond Dick hurried preparations for the return to Ouray.

The two horses used for pack animals by the Nonpareil gang were found in a valley in the hills and brought into requisition for the purpose of carrying the Cannonball Special back to town.

Chet Bagsby was released and ordered to take the machine apart.

This he did, and without very much urging, and its various parts were packed on the horses.

Fritz, assuming possession of his own mount, relieved Two-Spot's horse of the burden of carrying double; and Harry, likewise securing his mount, placed Bagsby on the horse he had ridden.

Immediately after preparations were completed, the cavalcade got in motion, the joyful Andy taking his forty pounds of bullion behind him. In spite of all forebodings of trouble from the Terrors, the return to town was safely accomplished.

By seven o'clock that evening the Nonpareil outfit were securely locked in the county jail, Griswold had turned his bullion over to the express company, Keever had gone home to his family, and Dick and his pards were taking what comfort they could, after their hard trip, at the Ouray Hotel.

Once again everything in that part of the range appeared to be "all serene."

## CHAPTER XII.

### THE FINALE.

"I've made some purty fine plays at the wrestlin' game in my time, pards," Harry was wont to remark after the deal with the Nonpareil people was out of the way, "but thet thar bout with the modern Hercules is a leetle the finest go I ever pulled off. He had me lookin' two ways for a passage out, at one spell, an' I only pulled through by my eyewinkers. Thet's a fact. It war Han'sum Harry's finest, an' no mistake."

Diamond Dick was very lenient with these actor-grafters—some of the Ouray people privately stated; but the left of the work of the capture had fallen on him, and it was agreed that he had the right to do as he thought best.

Chet Bagsby was the only one of the lot who was made to suffer for his misdeeds.

Diamond Dick assumed, rightly or wrongly, that he was the leader, had committed the Denver robbery, and had undoubtedly planned the theft of bullion at the Kohinoor.

For the latter crime Bagsby was not called to account; but an officer came down from Denver, got him and the bonds, paid Fritz Dunder \$1,000 and took the prisoner back to Colorado.

Apart from Bagsby, the one most guilty was the strong man.

He was spared because of Zuleika, of whose entire innocence the old veteran and his friends were completely convinced.

The remainder of the company was given twenty-four hours to leave town—and they left.

Andy Griswold gave Bung Loo a fifty-dollar bill, out of his own pocket.

For Andy reasoned that the bullion might not have been recovered if Bung Loo hadn't played the part he did.

Not only the Chink, but Fritz Dunder also, had done well.

Both lads had "starred themselves," as the New York kid put it.

Two-Spot had no kick coming because he and Bertie and Griswold took no part in the cruise of the Cannonball Special, since, like Bertie and Griswold, they were too good soldiers not to do their best in any position wherever placed, no matter who carried off the laurels.

The Fly-by-Night, otherwise the Cannonball Special, did not long remain in the possession of the Dicks.

They sold the machine to a party of prospectors, and no doubt it is sailing around the great desert at the present time, doing lawful and peaceable duty.

The sheriff from Tough Nut levied on the trunks of the Nonpareil Company, and they were sold at auction, the proceeds being sufficient to pay the Tough Nut board bill and the Canuck's bill, as well.

About the happiest member of Diamond Dick's combination was, beyond the shadow of a doubt, Fritz Dunder, the Dutch phenomenon.

He was free as the air once more, he was with his old pards, the Diamond Dicks, he had made a cool thousand by exercise of his wits—and why shouldn't he be happy?

One morning Bertie came into the general manager's office—which, of course, was old Diamond Dick's—and he found Fritz chuckling to himself and seemingly having a pleasant time, all by his lonesome.

"What's the matter with you, Fritz?" queried the young sport.

"Vell," gasped the Dutch boy, "I vas schust dinking oof der proom man, der poor proom man und vonderin'—vonderin'—"

"Wondering what?"

"Vonderin' oof he could make prooms fast enough for Katrina's use! Haw, haw, haw! I ped you der vetter iss storm all der time."

"Didn't you ever think that Katrina might chase after you, Fritz?"

"Do you dink so, Pertie?" asked Fritz, suddenly sobering.

"She might."

"Vell, she can't shace fader as I can run, so I von't get caught. But look here vonce. Oof you care anyding for your liddle Fritzty, don'd pring oop sooch subjects. It vasn't any chokin' madder, I tell you dot."

So the subject of Katrina was dropped.

THE END.

The next number of this Weekly will be entitled, "Diamond Dick's Flying Switch; or, Trapping the Tough Nut Terrors." There was a hot time coming for the Diamond Dicks—a death struggle. Look out for it next week, boys—it's a thriller.



You're doing great work, boys! Splendid work! This contest is going ahead of all previous ones at a mile-a-minute gait. Keep it up. Tell all your friends about it. Make them look at the list of prizes on page 30. You won't have to tell them to enter the contest. When they see the rules and what the prizes are they'll pitch in to win in the splendid way you have done. Here are a fresh batch of the best of the heaps of letters that are piling in by every mail.

### The Hazing of Jud Marsh.

(By Henry Hofmeister, Md.)

"Confound that fellow Marsh, he's always spoiling our fun," said Harry Hall, indignantly, to a group of his cronies who were in his room.

"That was as fine a trick as was ever played on old Tucker, and it would have worked but for that sneaking cad," he continued.

As he concluded he felt gingerly at the place where the seat of his trousers was.

"Say, fellows, I've got an idea. We can get even with Marsh," cried Sam Clark.

"An idea! Let's have it," cried the boys, breathlessly.

"You ain't afraid of a little danger, are you? If any of you are, why you needn't go in the scheme," replied Sam.

The boys all cried that they were ready for anything to get even with Marsh.

"Well, fellows, let's haze him," cried Sam.

"Haze him? Just the thing!" cried the boys, in unison.

Sam and Harry cooked up a scheme between them and unfolded it to the boys, who received it with expressions of delight.

voice that would have put a braying jackass or a howling tom-cat on a back fence to shame.

After the song he was made to dance, and the boys certainly had their revenge then. The sight of Marsh hopping and jumping around nearly drove some of them into convulsions.

Marsh kept up his dancing until ordered to stop.

"What next?" cried the boys.

"Bring forth the goat," commanded Harry Hall.

A large billy goat was brought out. All of the boys scattered, except Marsh, the goat charged and took Marsh in the rear, knocking him flat.

"Two to one on the goat!" cried the boys.

Again the goat charged Marsh, and sent him flying, much to the delight of the boys.

After making it lively for the hapless Marsh, for several minutes, the goat was taken away.

"Give us another song," cried the boys.

"I won't sing," Marsh yelled.

Two of the boys then seized him and made him swallow a heaping spoonful of "Devil's Sauce."

Then Sam Clark dumped a bucket of water over him.

Panting and gasping, Marsh dashed for the door and escaped.

Jud Marsh never informed on the boys again, because he knew what was in store for him if he did.

### Amateur Fire-fighting.

(By Clark Sursshelm, Pa.)

While we were walking down the C. and P. R. R. one of us suggested that we have some fun, so we all agreed upon it. Some of us wanted to go to the woods, others swimming, and at last we agreed to set a field afire.

Over the fence we went, and applied the match to the grass. After a while we became uneasy, for the fire was getting big, and we had not noticed the file works near, and the oil house on this side.

The fire became bigger, and went straight toward the oil house. There were about six of us. We started to make some plans to put out the fire, but none of them was agreed to.

When the town clock struck ten that night the boys had Marsh a prisoner in a house fixed up for hazing him.

Bennie Franklin went into an adjoining room and returned with a blanket.

Sam Clark, Franklin, Taylor and Hunter seized the corners of the blanket and Marsh was tossed into it, the four youths gave a heave at the blanket, up shot Marsh, till he struck the ceiling.

Each time he came down he was thrown up again.

Suddenly Taylor let go his end of the blanket, and Marsh slid out and struck the floor with a thump that jarred the building.

"Sing, give us a song," cried the boys after quiet was restored.

And Marsh was forced to sing, although he had a

At last I pulled off my coat, the rest followed my example, and we waded into the fire to get it out. Our coats flew into the air and then down among the flames.

It came within three feet of the oil house and then we became frightened, but we kept beating away. At last we got it under control, when it was within one foot of the oil house, and then our coats flew faster and then all was over.

But we did not have enough fire fighting, as we called it. The next day we went to the next field, where there was no danger of oil houses, but there was a small thicket near. We thought we could keep it from entering it, and so we started a fire. It got ahead of us, but we had our old coats there, and away we went in front of it, and tried to fight it back toward the pond, but the wind was in the fire's favor, so we jumped out of its way.

At last it came to a little pool, and we got it out. We were so frightened we did not set any more fields afire after that.

You are wise in resolving not to set any more fields afire. It's a pretty dangerous game and may turn out too seriously.

### The Climax.

(By S. Piotrowski, N. J.)

One night last June I was sitting on the front porch, although the minute and hour hands were pointing to twelve o'clock, when my sister stole out with her lover.

They were young and romantic. They stood gazing at the stars.

"That's Jupiter, dear, isn't it?" she murmured.

"Yes, pet, and that is Sirius," he replied, pointing to another star.

"Are you serious?" she cooed.

He kissed her. Then, pointing upward, he said:

"That's Mars, dove."

"And that's pa's," she whispered, as a footstep sounded inside. And if the young man hadn't "scooted" he would have seen more stars than he ever dreamed of.

### Frank's First Bear Hunt.

(By Cree Croft, Pa.)

Frank Smith was very fond of hunting. He had received a present of a new rifle from his uncle.

It was in the month of November, and it was decided that Frank should go with Harry Jones and Will Thomas, who were going to the Blue Mountains to hunt.

On the day they were to start Frank was up early and had his traveling bag packed and was soon ready to start.

They took the nine o'clock train and traveled until two o'clock in the afternoon. They got off the train and hired a wagon and got to the mountains at ten o'clock in the night.

Frank slept little that night, and in the morning the boys went out to hunt. They did not kill anything that day, and they went out the next day determined not to come back to the camp until they killed something.

They hunted until about four o'clock in the evening before they saw anything.

The boys had separated early in the afternoon. Frank had crossed a small stream and gone up the side of a mountain. Harry had gone down the stream, crossed, and was to join Frank on top of the mountain, while Will went up the stream and was to join Harry and Frank toward evening.

About four o'clock Frank saw a bear coming down the mountain. He shot at it, but was so nervous that he missed it. He loaded his gun and shot again and wounded it. It was only about fifty feet away.

Before he could load his gun again the bear was upon him. He drew his knife and the bear struck him and knocked the knife out of his hand, and Frank rolled down the mountain about fifteen feet.

He called for help as loud as he could. The bear was on him again. It bit his arm, and struck him on the head with its paws.

Just then he heard a rifle shot, and the bear fell on top of him. The next thing he knew he was in a wagon. He was suffering from his wounds.

The wagon soon arrived at the town where they had got off the train.

They drove to a doctor's house, where he had his wounds dressed.

His leg was broken and his arm and head were badly torn.

The next morning he was taken home.

In the afternoon Will and Harry were sitting by his bed.

Frank asked them how they came to his help. They told him that Will had heard him calling and came to help him, and saw the bear on him and shot it. The weight of it on him had broken his leg.

It was about six weeks before he was able to be around, and he says he will go to the same mountains and hunt next fall.

A good, exciting story, Cree.

### A Runaway.

(By Parris R. Clay, Kentucky.)

It was a bright sunshiny day of June 14, 1893. I had just started on my way home when I heard a clattering of hoofs.

I was up above the road about three hundred yards. Well, I ran down the hill to the road and saw a horse running up the road with the shafts of a buggy hanging to him. He was kicking every jump he made.

I started to run after the horse, but I saw I could not catch the horse.

I stood for a second or two thinking what to do. Just then I heard a woman's voice away down the road. I started and finally found two ladies lying along the road.

The head of one of the ladies was bleeding very badly. I went over to the other lady, and I asked her if she was hurt, but she made me no answer at all.

I bent over her and soon found out that she had fainted, and I ran up to the house and got some water and dashed it in her face.

The girl opened her eyes and looked up at me and then she said:

"Oh, my leg! oh, my leg is broken!" When she said that her leg was broken I did not know what to do. I was there all by myself at that time. Then I commenced

to shout for help, and just at that time the other girl got upon her feet and was trying to walk to us, but she fell down on her side up against the side of the bank and said:

"Oh, my head! Oh my head is killing me!"

Just at that moment Mrs. Howard and her only son came to us on a run.

"What is the matter?" she said.

I could not talk. Then she said again, "What is the matter?"

"These two girls got thrown out of the buggy," I said, "and one is dead, I think."

"Oh, it is my girl Nellie! Are you hurt very badly?"

"Yes, mamma, my head is cut, and it is hurting me badly. Oh, is Ethel dead or not?"

She went over to the girl's side and the girl opened her eyes and said:

"Is that you, auntie?"

"Yes, this is me, Ethel. Are you hurt very badly?"

"Yes, aunt, my leg is hurt. I am afraid it is broken."

"Well, we must get these two girls up to the house some way or other," I said.

"Can you walk, Nell?" said Mrs. Howard.

"Yes, mamma, but I am weak. Can you and the little boy carry Ethel up to the house? Lay her down on the sofa. Willie, run quick to the doctor's house and tell the doctor to come at once."

Parris is all right. He was bred in old Kentucky, and he shows it.

### A Bold Italian.

(By Chas. Rogers, N. Y.)

During the Spanish-American War the recruiting stations for the United States army were quite busy.

The doctors were examining men when suddenly all eyes are turned to a ragged Italian, who just came in. He is six feet tall, clean-shaven, and powerfully built, can read and write English and wants to join the army.

His turn came and he passed the examination all right, and was sent to the Brooklyn Navy Yard, where he was placed on board the receiving ship Vermont.

Some time before the police were looking for a man called "Heartless Joe," the man who would kill a man for pleasure, who lately robbed and killed a rich broker in broad daylight.

After hiding two weeks and longing for freedom, he came out and walked up the Bowery to Cohen's pawn shop, where he pawned a diamond pin which he had stolen from his victim, and spent the money freely till dark, then he bought an evening paper which was full of the murder, and about the reward offered for his arrest, and to his surprise found that the police had traced the pin and were hot after him.

He went to his old hiding-place among his friends, but found they were all willing to hand him to the police for the reward. He found some ragged clothes, put them on, made his escape and walked along till he came to the recruiting station and thought that was a safe way to escape.

Not long after reaching the Navy Yard he was placed in the guardhouse, and fearing he was to be shot, he

made his escape and was about to scale the wall when a voice rang out:

"Halt! stand!"

Joe kept on till the marine fired, and he fell dead.

The captain of the yard soon learned of his prisoner's escape, and the marines were soon searching the yard, and in a short while they learned of his death, and thus the world was rid of one of its most treacherous villains.

### The Brave Corporal.

(By Leonard Garvin, Canada.)

Corporal Hunter and four men of the Thirtieth Wellington Rifles were returning from the military school at Toronto. They had just finished their term there and were returning home.

The train was speeding along at about fifty miles an hour, when all at once the rails spread as they were crossing a bridge. The engine broke through, and the cars piled up on top of one another and caught fire from the engine.

The car the soldiers were in lay on its side, with only one place to get out, through a window. Everybody rushed for this hole, the men trampling down the women and children in their haste. The corporal ordered his men to shoot down the first man who went out, till all the women and children were out. They went out one by one, and the men followed till all were out but the corporal and his men.

By this time the heat of the burning car was getting unbearable. The smoke was nearly suffocating the soldiers. They stumbled through the hole, now wrapped in flames, the hair burned from their heads and their faces and hands covered with blisters.

All were out now but the corporal. Everybody stood silently watching the hole for him to appear. At last he stumbled out, his face burned beyond recognition. As he landed on the ground he brought his poor, burned hand up to the salute. He stood for a moment, then staggered and fell, never to rise again. He died in about ten minutes after bidding farewell to his men. He had paid dearly for his bravery, and now over his grave stands a fine marble monument erected by the people in the car.

A splendid story, well told, Leonard. You also deserve credit for your neatness and legible handwriting.

### A Saloon Duel.

(By Manuel U. Vivil, Col.)

A few days ago at a saloon in Trinidad two men fought a duel which resulted fatally for both of them.

A Mexican whose name was Trujillo went into the saloon and started to abuse the bartender. Lewis Chambers, a bystander, tried to settle the quarrel between the Mexican and the saloon man, whereupon Trujillo drew his gun and challenged Chambers to a fight.

Chambers pulled out his six-shooter and both began shooting. Chambers was shot through the abdomen and died a few hours after. Trujillo was shot five times. He tried to reach his house, which was close by, but ran only a few steps and fell dead.



## NORTH POLE ADVENTURE.

By P. HAMILTON MYERS.

When the renowned and eccentric Captain Hayes invited my friend, Seth Taber, to join his expedition to the Arctic regions, in the summer of 1870, the latter assented with great eagerness. Not that Seth had anything to gain, more than his subsistence and small pay, but he had a young man's craving for novelty and excitement, and just then he fancied that he was very miserable, owing to a love affair which had resulted in the perfidy of a beautiful girl.

Let me tell his story in his own words, as related to me some time ago, for Seth, although a traveled man, does not wield a pen himself.

"I went with the expedition," he said. "I shall not give you a history of my strange journey; I shall not tell you much about altitudes and longitudes, but I shall simply narrate a single incident of our experience, which occurred in Baffin's Bay, where we had been ice-locked for months; where the sun did not rise nor set for many weeks, but circled about the horizon, sinking a little lower daily, until only a rim of its disk was visible, and we had to climb the masts to get a vanishing view of even that. It was all very queer, and the wisest of us (not over wise) had to study our geography and astronomy to make it all out, though our captain gave us informal lectures on the subject.

"'I'll be blamed if I can understand it,' said Bill Boson, an old tar, who had listened with a puzzled air to one of these harangues, and had examined a diagram on the cabin wall, obscuring it with tobacco smoke as he did so. 'Here's the 'arth and there's the sun, or at least the edge of it; now what the reason is that he can't rise and set as he used to do in York State, instead of fooling around there is more than I can tell or anybody else, I guess.'

"When the great luminary had disappeared entirely for several weeks this same sailor showed great uneasiness, and would listen to no more discourses on astronomy.

"'You think that ere sun will come back ag'in, do you?' he asked, one day.

"'Oh, yes!'

"'I don't! It'll never come back! It don't stand to reason, and if I'd known how things was goin' to be, I'd never have come on this fool's errand. It'll jes' grow

darker and darker here until it's pitch dark; then where'll we be?'

"'We shall have the moon, and the stars, and the aurora borealis.'

"'Oh, yes, part of the time; them ain't daylight, though. I don't like it. Jack Halyard says (he's got a 'stronomy book, too) we're living almost on the tip top of the 'arth, and that's what's the matter. Maybe we'll slide down and off; who knows? I don't like it.'

"I am ashamed," continued Seth, "that I amused myself with Bill's fears, pretending to believe in them at times, and even exaggerating them to a considerable extent. But there was cause enough for alarm aside from any doubts as to the physical course of nature in the due return of spring and summer, for the weather was intensely cold, the ice blockade seemed permanent, and there was no positive certainty that one season or even two would thaw us out.

"One day we were watching for seals (Bill Boson and I about two miles from the ship where we had shot one, and were hiding behind a hummock of ice for others to come up through the airholes, which they themselves had kept open, breaking through them from time to time to permit of their emerging.

"It seemed cruel business, but we thought it sport, for it gave us a pleasurable sort of excitement, besides which we were credited on the ship's books with a small sum for each one that we brought in, and I gave my share to Bill.

"It was daylight, or nearly so, although there was no sun, for the twilight of the first few weeks is about the same as day. We had spent an hour or more in this employment, thickly wrapped in robes and caps, and rubbers, and taking an occasional run on the ice to keep our blood in circulation, and I had just missed my third shot at a seal, seeing the wounded or frightened game disappearing under the ice, when we became suddenly aware that we were not alone in our sport.

"There was another hunter in the field, who was by no means hunting seals; he was after us, knowing very well that we could not retreat under the ice as the seals had done, and thus escape him. Bill and I made the discovery almost at the same moment that a full-grown polar bear was within thirty rods of us, making such

rapid and direct approaches that there could be no doubt of his intentions.

"There was only one thing to be done; so we did not stop for consultation, but started and ran, of course toward the ship, which was considered under all circumstances our ark of safety. But it was fully two miles distant—quite too far to be gained ahead of our fleet-footed enemy, and Bill was decidedly ahead of me in the race.

"Bruin knew his prey—he made for me. Unfortunately, I had just discharged my gun, and there was no time to reload it with my benumbed fingers. It had been hard work at the best, even with abundant leisure to effect it. I could do nothing but throw it away, as it only encumbered me, and I gained some time in this way, as my unreasoning pursuer stopped a full minute to examine it.

"When he had tossed it aside and renewed the chase I heard Bill calling to me, and saw him point without stopping, toward some old, long-disused Esquimaux ice huts, which were considerably nearer to us than the ship, and which we had often seen and examined.

"We knew them to be empty, and that two of them were entirely frozen up, while in the third, the door (a block of ice) only partly filled the entrance, for we had once crept through the passage to explore the interior.

"I did not hesitate. My case seemed quite hopeless on the first alternative, and nearly so on the other; indeed, I think the bear himself so regarded it, for he did not seem to exert himself, but came on with a long, steady lope, doubtless, measuring the distance and the steps necessary to overcome it, quite as accurately as if he had been a land surveyor.

"I now threw off my outermost overcoat, and this also my enemy stopped and sniffed, while I increased my speed, now directing my course to the ice huts. The panting beast paused only a few seconds this time; and I could plainly hear his breath, as well as his steps which were remarkably uniform in sound.

"He still gained rapidly. I believed my last hour to be at hand. I need not say that I was afraid; I was terrified—horrified beyond description, and I prayed as only dying men pray.

"Bruin was at my heels, certainly not thrice his own length distant, when I came to the first of the huts. The others, alas, were too distant to reach, and this was not the one we had squeezed into.

"I got behind it, interposing it between myself and the foe; who, of course, attempted to reach me by going around it. Here a new kind of race began, and as I kept nearer to the periphery of the circle than he could do, owing to the great length of his body, I think I gained a little advantage.

"After this had gone on long enough to become monotonous, he suddenly turned and went the other way, thinking probably, with a brute's unreason, that that must be the shorter route. Of course, I followed his example, and so the chase went on.

"At last he stopped, and seemed to reflect, after which he made a quick leap toward the top of the low hut or hummock, scrambling up awkwardly through the deep snow, but gaining the broad apex, where he looked down upon me with very evident triumph.

"I was now clearly in his power, for he could descend

at any point, but when, at the next moment he attempted to do so, he slipped and rolled to the very base of the hut, where he was for the moment so embedded in the snow that he could not instantly extricate himself.

"I took advantage of this mishap to start and run toward the next hut, having gained a little breathing spell, and as I reached this hoped-for refuge ahead of my enemy I ran around it to discover the entrance into which I had once crept, but which was now filled nearly to the top with drifted and frozen snow.

"I did not know whether I could get in. I did not know whether I ought to, for if I could enter, perhaps the gaunt bear could follow. But being cold, numbed, and nearly exhausted, there seemed no other chance, and with the aid of both hands and feet I made an opening and crawled through, hoping to fill up the aperture with the loose snow and hide it from the enemy.

"Vain hope! He was close at hand. He saw me enter and his huge head was quickly at the opening and protruding through it, forcibly but slowly, as if it found some obstruction. I took out my knife, now my only weapon, and opened it with my teeth, for my fingers refused all service, but the red, wide-opened jaw, now so very close to me, nearly seized my hand, and wrist, and knife together, while I stopped and hesitated where and how to strike.

"The situation was terrific. I stepped back; the head advanced, followed by the shoulders and by one paw, while the other seemed to be doubled under him. I struck feebly with my knife, and a loud roar followed, but the beast did not advance nor retreat, and then the idea flashed upon me that he was stuck fast in the small hole into which he had so eagerly crowded. Here was a gleam of hope, and I stuck again. He only roared and dodged his head aside; then I was sure that he was fast, and I took courage and plied my knife more vigorously, keeping clear of his distended jaws, and aiming at his eyes.

"Whatever I could do I must do quickly. His warm body was already melting the snow and ice around him, and he was thus enlarging the orifice which as yet held him fast. A vigorous bound might bring him through.

"I again aimed at one of his eyes, but although my hands were now warming to their work, it was no easy matter to reach those terrible orbs. I tried his neck, and although my knife blade went in it was without seeming effect; but as he turned his great head on one side, revealing the cord-like artery I gathered all my energy and made a thrust at it—a deep, slashing cut. The life blood poured out and spouted over me, and I knew that my work was done, and drew back into the hut to rest.

"It was done. I poured forth thanks while the brute poured forth his blood, roaring loudly at first, but with a bellowing which soon diminished in volume, until it sank to feeble groans. When I had rested from my great fatigue, I went to him (pityingly, I must say), but I cut his other artery and hastened his end.

"How to get out of my prison was the next problem. I could not move the great carcass; I was fearfully cold, and I had to run and jump to regain my warmth and vitality. But I was sure that some of my friends were by this time in search of me, nor was I mistaken, for the captain and nearly all his crew were out on the quest. I

soon heard their shouts, and made them hear mine, and our reunion was not long postponed. You may be sure it was a joyous one, and that the adventure was fully and minutely discussed around the great carcass, which was so evidently dead when they at last came up that they did not consider it necessary to shoot or stab him before dragging him out of the hole into which he was so tightly wedged.

"Some of the men had brought dogs and sleds with them, for a probable emergency, and on one of these sleds the prize was easily dragged to the ship, accompanied by the noisy cortege, who made the winter air ring with their shouts.

"Of course it belonged to me," continued Seth, "and I afterward had its skin prepared and stuffed, and sold it to the Navy Yard museum in Brooklyn."

### A Bad Scare.

(By Remy Kerr, N. C.)

I had to pass through a large strip of woods to and from my work.

On my way to work one morning I killed a rabbit and put it in a hollow stump and thought I would get it that afternoon.

When I returned from my work it was about dark. As I came near where I had put my rabbit I noticed a large man standing there.

My mule began to shy and started to run toward the river.

I heard a loud bark and I knew at once what it was. I saw it was my dog Carlo, who had been there watching the rabbit all day for me.

I rode back and got my rabbit and rode home. The next day I gave Carlo a rabbit dinner. Afterward I never let Carlo get out of my sight.

### A Narrow Escape.

(By Breese Bell, O. T.)

One day I started to herd cattle for a man at \$15 per month.

In the first part of the day I got along all right. About 11 o'clock the cattle wanted to go into some woods near by. I started to head them off, when my pony got scared at something and threw me against a tree.

When I came to myself I was at home on the bed. I had been out of my head for two hours. My lower lip was all torn away from my chin bone. I was laid up for two weeks.

That's short but thrilling, Breese.

## CORRESPONDENCE.

Will the following, who were contestants in a previous contest, send their full addresses to the editor of this weekly: Roy H. Hall, J. N. Shibler, John Purdy, William R. Turner, James D. Berry, Albert Franco, Mail Messinger, William Allen, Charley H. Thompson, Edward D. Lynch, and J. H. McLean.

# DO YOU WANT TO BE AN AUTHOR?

**H**AVE YOU BEEN reading the thrilling stories that have appeared in the contests going on in the **DIAMOND DICK WEEKLY** recently? You were interested in them; were you not? They were all written by readers of **DIAMOND DICK** such as you are. Do you know any thrilling stories or interesting incidents? If you do you should enter the present

## PRIZE CONTEST

you have a good chance of securing a prize. Over one hundred boys have secured prizes in the last two **DIAMOND DICK** Contests. In the present Contest there are

## FIFTY PRIZES.

**Here Are Full Directions:** Take any incident you can think of. It may be a fire, a runaway, an accident, an adventure, or even a murder. It doesn't matter whether you were there or not. Write it up as graphically as you can, make it full of "action," and send it to us. The articles should not be over 500 words in length. The Contest closes **MAY 1**. Send in your stories at once, boys. All the best ones will be published during the progress of the Contest. Remember, whether your story wins a prize or not, it stands a good chance of being published, together with your name.

## HERE ARE THE PRIZES:

**THE FIVE BOYS** who send us the Most Interesting and Best Written "Stories" will each receive ten books, which they will select from the list published in **No. 278**. These books include the finest and most interesting boys' stories ever published.

**THE TEN BOYS** who send in the next best "Stories" will each receive any four books they may select from the list in **No. 278**.

**THE FIFTEEN BOYS** who send us the next best "Stories" will each receive any three books they may select from the list in **No. 278**.

**THE NEXT TWENTY BOYS** will receive any two books they may select from the list in **No. 278**.

To become a contestant for these prizes cut out the Amateur Journalism Coupon printed herewith; fill it out properly, and send it to **DIAMOND DICK WEEKLY**, care of Street & Smith, 238 William St., New York City, together with your "story." No story will be considered that does not have this coupon accompanying it.

## Diamond Dick Weekly Amateur Journalism Contest

No. 3.

Date..... 1902

Name.....

City or Town.....

State.....

Street and No.....

Title of Story.....

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253—Diamond Dick's Dark Case; or, The Spell of the "Loco-Loco."  
254—Diamond Dick's Two-Call Five; or, The Struggle at the Big Tanks.  
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256—Diamond Dick's Prospect; or, The Big Find in Puma Cañon.  
257—Diamond Dick and the Gold Bugs.  
258—Diamond Dick's Clean-Up; or, The Thugs of Comet City.  
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